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Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

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Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

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by **admin**

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PART 2 OF 3

How the Greens Chose Kerry over Nader

By Walt Contreras Sheasby

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July 19, 2004

The battleground at the Green Party National Convention on June 23–29 stretched from the West (Oregon, Nevada, New Mexico) to the Great Lakes (Minnesota and Wisconsin) and the corners of the Atlantic coast (Maine and Florida). Those are the seven Unsafe States with Green ballot lines, and denying those ballot lines to Ralph Nader was the mission accomplished at the convention in Minneapolis. David Cobb won the election with 408 of 770 ballots cast, based on the strength of his support in places like Montana, Nebraska, Wisconsin, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and, of course, his native state of Texas. [1] The urban branches of the party were overcome largely by bending the rural twigs sprouting in Bush country.

From the Green Politics Network to the Cobb/LaMarche Debacle

The convention result was largely engineered by veterans of the Green Politics Network (GPN), which was founded in spring 1992 by John Rensenbrink, Dee Berry, and others opposed to the "Fundamentalism" of the early Greens. There had been a national Green organization called the Greens/Green Party USA since 1991, growing out of the Committees of Correspondence formed in St. Paul in 1984. The GPN, however, shunned these radicals and hoped to link up electoral-oriented pragmatic reformers into a confederation based on state parties rather than membership locals.

In 1995–96 many of the radicals balked at a presidential campaign, while others worked on the search for a candidate. According to Patrick Mazza of the Oregon Pacific Party, "In states such as Ohio and Texas, G/GPUSA activists blocked efforts to put Nader on the ballot."

Immediately after the election on November 16–17, 1996, an invitation-only meeting of sixty-two Nader supporters was held at the Glen-Ora Farm in Middleburg, forty miles west of Washington, D.C. This historic farm had been surveyed by George Washington at age sixteen. It seems appropriate now that after gathering in a room where JFK used to hold meetings after his election in 1960, many attendees then are now supporting another JFK in 2004.

When Howie Hawkins, a leader of the Greens/Green Party USA and a New York Nader campaigner came to Glen-Ora, he was blocked from entering on the first day, and on the second day, as Mazza put it, "Hawkins was told in no uncertain terms the new organization is a fait accompli."

Rensenbrink announced that it "has been a long, arduous, often agonizing journey," but the Middleburg Meeting "heralds the emergence, at last, of a viable, vigorous, and facilitative Association of State Green Parties (ASGP)."

Nader told the sixty-two ASGP founders at Middleburg that "whoever's going to go for the Democratic nomination in 2000 has got to realize they are going to lose if they don't stop the drift into the corporate maul." [2] The cards were all on the table four years before Nader's second Green campaign, but as the election neared November 2000, the GPN veterans and some Nader novices began to urge their candidate to take a dive.

Nader had written the forward to Rensenbrink's *Against All Odds: The Green Transformation of American Politics* in 1999, and had told left Greens that the author was a sterling radical and to be trusted, but within a year Rensenbrink was openly venomous toward his former mutual admirer. Rensenbrink conceals his personal rancor in a jumble of indictments that are taken at face value by the liberal media and Green novices: "[Nader] doesn't want to be a Green, he runs with his coterie rather than party organizers, he doesn't involve local Green leaders and he doesn't get the racial issue. I fear if Nader runs, he'll drag down every other Green in this country." [3]

As the A.P. wire reported on June 23, 2004, "Delegate John Rensenbrink of Maine said he was a Nader adviser but had to break with the candidate over his insistence on running an aggressive campaign in swing states, believing it could lead to Bush's reelection. While no backer of John Kerry, Rensenbrink believes the Democrat is the lesser of two evils." Apparently even less of an evil than Nader himself.

Pot-Boiling the Twigs

Various anti-Nader, Anybody-But-Bush, and openly pro-Kerry Web sites and listservs all tried to influence gullible Greens before the convention. The GreensforKerry.com Web site (registered through Go-Daddy.com) was revealed as belonging to NextGeneration.org, a campaign consulting firm mostly for environmental causes but also working for Democratic politicians. [4]

A mass e-mail letter was sent to Greens by Jeff Bennett in San Francisco, who claimed to be a member since 1998, saying: "It is shocking to me that the Green Party would even consider endorsing Ralph Nader for president this year. ... But now I see that the Green Party leaders might not be working for environmental protections and social justice at all. Maybe they just want to break the two-party system, even if they break the planet in the process." No one in the Greens in the Bay Area recalled ever seeing or hearing the name of the sender.

Not to be outdone by covert Democrats, seven Green Party politicians, headed by David

Segal, a city councilor in Providence, Rhode Island, formed Greens for Impact (GFI) to "encourage voters in swing states to vote for John Kerry in the general election." Segal revealed that the real aim of the Rensenbrinkians was not independent political action but dependent political action, as with the German Greens: "Though small, the Green Party sometimes has enough sway to change the outcome of an election, but as a party that does not believe in fascism and extortion, our segment of the progressive movement must work together with the dominant left-of-center party, as our fellow Green Party members in Europe and many other nations have done." [5]

The most ambitious effort was funded by George Soros through the Democrats' 527 groups, [6] three of which combined to focus their anti-Nader TV advertising firepower on six states that were decided by two percentage points or less in 2000 -- Wisconsin, New Mexico, Florida, New Hampshire, Iowa, and Oregon. In addition the groups formed TheNaderFactor.com to also beam Internet pleas by repentant Greens and Naderites. [7]

The Real Strategy

To deny those six or more states to Nader, primary battles had to first be won in as many of the forty-five states with delegates as possible, even though only twenty-three states have a ballot line at the moment. In fact, some of the key skirmishes were in states that failed to get a Green line this year, such as Texas and Illinois. Other delegates were selected by relatively small Green formations in the South, stretching from Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia to North Carolina and Virginia, all states without a ballot primary which nevertheless chose and sent delegates to keep Nader off the ballot in other states.

Belinda Coppernoll, secretary of the Green Alliance, the left tendency in the Green Party, and a delegate from Ellensburg, Washington, summed up the process:

The GPUS Coordinating Council (aka GPCC), which is the national leadership and governing group, is made up of two GPUS reps from each state; was heavily dominated by pro-Cobb leaders who pushed the pro-Cobb agenda for the last year relentlessly. Several in the GPUS leadership were responsible for Nader not seeking the GP nomination last fall when he went out on his exploratory committee. These same aggressive anti-Nader Greens dominated the Steering Committee as well, and the Rules/Procedures, Convention committees. They used their internal power to get the nominee they had pre-selected (Cobb) and tried to use a variety of manipulative tactics and undemocratic processes in their quest to stop Nader/Camejo from winning the GP endorsement or even sharing it with David Cobb, so there would be two progressive choices on the ballot lines. Little was fair or balanced in the conduct of this nominating election process. [8]

The unlikely candidate who defeated Nader, forty-one-year-old David Cobb, said that

he would campaign vigorously for all Green candidates in the forty states not considered critical to the outcome of the presidential race. [9] He will be the Green Party candidate on the ballot in all the states that supported Nader, including the biggest, California, as well as Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont. The spectacle of rural states blocking progressive states is an old one in America: it appears in the guise of the electoral college, which overrides any popular vote. The breakdown of the delegate allocation at the convention reveals exactly how that worked. [10]

Had the contest been decided by "one person equals one vote," the Nader/Camejo ticket easily would have been the overwhelming winner; among Greens, the polls show 70 percent support for Nader. [11] While California only had about one-seventh of the delegates at the convention, they represent over one-half of the registered Greens in the country. David Cobb, a Texan who moved to California, won only 5,000 votes, or 10 percent, in the California primary. As a stand-in for Ralph Nader, Peter Camejo won 76 percent, or 33,000 votes, in the California primary, but nationally he had less than half the number of delegates that Cobb claimed. This was on the basis, in many cases, of meetings of less than a hundred Greens in various states without a ballot primary. Those who could afford to go were given delegate status, regardless of whether they faithfully reflected the vote on the candidates.

Moreover, many of the delegates claiming to favor other candidates or to be uncommitted in order to be sent to the convention may have intended to vote for Cobb all along, as soon as they were released from their state mandates after the first round of voting. Some of the most prominent longtime allies of John Rensenbrink, like Tony Affigne from Rhode Island, arrived in Milwaukee as nominally undecided delegates. In several states a significant number of Nader/Camejo or Lorna Salzman votes in the first round turned to Cobb/LaMarche votes in the second round.

As Kevin McKeown, mayor of Santa Monica, California, explained: "In the first round on Saturday, our California delegates were bound to the statewide primary results from March. California cast thirteen votes for Cobb out of our 132 delegate seats, based on his 10 percent showing in the California primary."

"In the second round, it became apparent that Cobb had organized at the county level, particularly in the Bay Area, to get his delegates appointed. When they were released from the primary vote mandate of all California Greens, they switched to Cobb." This meant an extra twenty-six votes for Cobb. "The shift in the California vote alone was enough to put Cobb over the top. If California had again voted the primary outcome of 10 percent Cobb in round two, Cobb would not have had a majority." [12]

As one delegate, Ken Smith, reported: "The only other person waiting with me was sitting two chairs over to my right, and she was our Lorna Salzman team leader. I could swear she also had a Nader/Camejo poster, but in the second round it somehow transformed itself into a Cobb sign.

"The first person to arrive on the left of this so-called Lorna Salzman California delegation row ... was Medea Benjamin. Medea placed three Cobb posters on the chairs to my left, and a second woman with a Cobb sign then sat down on my

right. Now why would I think that maybe there was some type of a preplanned conspiracy?"

Carole King - It's Too Late(1971) with Guitar sol...



It's Too Late, Baby, by Carole King

Stayed in bed all mornin' just to pass the time.
There's somethin' wrong here, there can be no denyin'.
One of us is changin', or maybe we've just stopped tryin'.

And it's too late, baby now, it's too late,
Though we really did try to make it.
Somethin' inside has died, and I can't hide,
And I just can't fake it, oh, no, no.

It used to be so easy, livin' here with you.
You were light and breezy, an' I knew just what to do.
Now you look so unhappy, and I feel like a fool.

And it's too late, baby now, it's too late,
Though we really did try to make it.
Somethin' inside has died, and I can't hide,
And I just can't fake it, oh, no, no.

There'll be good times again for me and you,
But we just can't stay together; don't you feel it too?
Still I'm glad for what we had and how I once loved you.

And it's too late, baby now, it's too late,
Though we really did try to make it. (we can't make it)
Somethin' inside has died, and I can't hide,
And I just can't fake it, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no.

It's too late baby, it's too late now darling
It's too late.

In the decisive second round, in which Nader/Camejo delegates and those of other candidates supporting that ticket were asked to vote for no nomination, the tally was Cobb, 408; No Nominee, 308; Mesplay, 43; Beeman, 8; abstain, 3.

John Rensenbrink's Maine delegation cast all but one vote for Cobb. In Missouri, a state which has long had a large left Green community in St. Louis that is not actively involved in the party, Dee Berty of Kansas City delivered all her state's votes to Cobb.

Blair Bobier of the Pacific Green Party in Oregon delivered virtually all his state's votes to Cobb. Texas alone cast 34–1 votes for Cobb on the basis of a meeting not much larger than the number of delegates. Georgia chose its delegates at a small meeting far removed from Atlanta during the heightened security of the G8 Summit when travel and lodging were difficult to arrange. As a result, the Georgia State Green Convention that sent twelve delegates to Milwaukee -- eleven obligated to voting for Cobb -- had a grand total of seventeen people in attendance.

In Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Montana the influence of the old New Party chapters that entered the Greens there was decisive.

The Anybody-But-Bush syndrome prevailed at this convention, and John Rensenbrink was honored in the final moments with an orchestrated homage. The Greens will probably come to regret their rigging of the tally in order to stop Nader. The low vote in November for the Cobb/LaMarche ticket will disappoint and anger those Greens who have invested their hopes in the party. There will be a considerable price paid in ballot lines by the less-secure states who depend on a certain percentage of the vote to stay on the ballot.

On the other hand, it is clear that the Greens for Nader and the Green Alliance do not intend to leave the party or allow themselves to be pushed out by the Rensenbrink wing. To the would-be terminators, the left wing of the Greens promises, "We'll be back."

Suicide Right on the Stage: The Demise of the Green Party

By Jeffrey St. Clair Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>, July 2, 2004

"Ignorance of remote causes disposeth men to attribute all events to the causes immediate and instrumental: for these are all the causes they perceive."

-- Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651)

So this is what alternative politics in America has degenerated to: Pat LaMarche, the newly minted vice-presidential candidate of the Green Party, has announced that she might not even vote for herself in the fall elections. The Greens, always a skittish bunch, are so traumatized by the specter of Bush and Cheney that they've offered up their own party -- born out of rage at decades of betrayal by Democrats from Carter to Clinton -- as a kind of private contractor for the benefit of those very same Democratic Party power brokers.

Take a close look at what LaMarche, a not-ready-for-primetime radio "personality," had to say to say to her hometown newspaper in Maine only days after winning the nomination in Milwaukee.

"If the race is tight, I'll vote for Kerry," LaMarche said. "I love my country. But we should ask them that, because if Dick Cheney loved his country, he wouldn't be voting for himself."

This is the sound a political party makes as it commits suicide.

LaMarche's running mate, David Cobb, is no better. The obscure lawyer from Texas is a dull and spiritless candidate, handled by some truly unsavory advisers (more on them in future columns). In action, he functions as a kind of bland political zombie from a Roger Corman flick, lumbering across the progressive landscape from Oregon to Wisconsin and back again, to the tune of his liberal political masters. The tune? The familiar refrain of "Anybody But Bush."

Bland, yes, but it worked, thanks to the likes of Medea Benjamin and the pompous Ted Glick. At their recent convention in Milwaukee, the Green Party, heavily infiltrated by Democratic Party operatives, rejected the ticket of Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo in favor of the sour campaign of Cobb and LaMarche.

This won't harm Nader much. Indeed, it may liberate him. Free of the Green Party's encyclopedic platform, Nader can now distill the themes of his campaign to the most potent elements (war, jobs, corruption, and the environment) and, unburdened by the concern of party building, Nader can, if he chooses (and he should), focus his efforts only on the battleground states, where Kerry must either confront Nader's issues or lose the election. It's as simple as that.

The fatal damage in Milwaukee was done to the Green Party itself, where Cobb and his cohort sabotaged the aspirations of thousands of Greens who had labored for more than a decade to build their party into a national political force, capable of winning a few seats here and there and, even more importantly, defeating Democrats who behave like Republicans (d. Al Gore). The fruits of all that intense grassroots organizing were destroyed in an instant.

But behold: the rebuffed Nader continues to poll nearly 6 percent without the Green Party behind him. Yet, you can't discern Cobb's numbers with an electron microscope. Of course, the pungent irony is that's precisely the way Cobb and his backers want it.

So, the Greens have succeeded in doing what seemed impossible only months ago: they've made the quixotic campaign of Dennis Kucinich, which still chugs along claiming micro-victory after micro-victory long after the close of the primaries (indeed there have been more victories after the polls closed than before), seem like a credible political endeavor. Of course, Cobb and Kucinich share the same objective function: to lure progressives away from Nader and back into the plantation house of the Democratic Party.

But at least Kucinich remained a Democrat. Cobb and LaMarche were supposedly leaders of a political party that formed not in opposition to Republicans, but from outrage at the rightward and irredeemable drift of the Democratic Party. Apparently, the Green Party has not only lost its mind, it's lost its entire central nervous system, including the spine -- especially its spine. They've surrendered to the politics of fear. And once the white flag is raised there's little chance of recovering the ground you've given up.

Always nearly immobilized by an asphyxiating devotion to political correctness, the Green Party has now taken this obsession to its logical extreme by nominating a pair of political cretins at the top of its ticket. Under the false banner of the Cobb/LaMarche campaign, the Green Party is instructing its members to vote for its candidates only in states where their vote doesn't matter. This is the so-called safe-state strategy.

Safe? Safe for whom? Not for Afghan or Iraqi citizens. Not for U.S. troops. Not for the detainees at Gitmo, Bagram, or Abu Ghraib. Not for migrant farm laborers or steelworkers. Not for the welfare mother or the two million souls rotting in American prisons. Not for the spotted owl, the streams of Appalachia, or the rain forests of Alaska. Not for the residents of Cancer Alley or the peasants of Colombia or teenage girls slaving away in Nike's toxic Indonesia sneaker mills. Not for the Palestinians, the Lakota of Pine Ridge, or elementary school students from the hard streets of Oakland. Not for the hopeless denizens of death row or three-strikers in for life for a gram of crack or gays hoping to unite in marriage or even cancer patients seeking simple herbal relief from excruciating pain.

A crucial player in this unsavory affair was Medea Benjamin, the diva of Global Exchange. In rationalizing her decisive vote backing the Cobb/LaMarche ticket, Benjamin emitted this profundity: "John Kerry is not George Bush." Apparently, that tiny sliver of genetic variation is all it comes down to these days.

Yes, Medea, you're right. Kerry is simply Kerry, a bona fide war criminal, with a record of political infamy that is just as malodorous as that of George Bush -- only it's longer. Over the past four years, Kerry has been complicit in the enactment of some of Bush's most disgusting policies. Indeed, these days Kerry offers himself up mainly as a more competent manager of the Bush agenda, a steadier hand on the helm of the Empire.

Kerry stands unapologetically for nearly every issue that caused the Greens to bolt the Democratic Party. He was present at the founding of the Democratic Leadership Council, the clique of neoliberals that seeks to purge the Democratic Party of every last vestige of progressivism and reshape it as a hawkish and pro-business party with a soft spot for abortion -- essentially a stingier version of the Rockefeller Republicans.

Kerry enthusiastically backed both of Bush's wars and now, at the very moment Bush is signaling a desire to retreat, the senator is calling for twenty-five thousand new troops to be sent to Iraq, where under his plan the U.S. military will remain entrenched for at least the next four years.

Kerry supported the Patriot Act without reservation or even much contemplation. Lest you conclude that this was a momentary aberration sparked by the post-September 11 hysteria, consider the fact that Kerry also voted for the two Clinton-era predecessors to the Patriot Act, the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1996 Counter-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which were just as bad if not worse.

Although he regularly hams it up in photo ops with the barons of big labor, Kerry voted for NAFTA, the WTO, and virtually every other job-slashing trade pact that has come before the Senate. Kerry, who has courted and won the endorsement of nearly every police association in the nation, regularly calls for putting another one hundred thousand cops on the streets and even tougher criminal sanctions against victimless crimes. He refused to reconsider his fervid support for the insane war on drug users, which has destroyed families and clogged our prisons with more than two million people, many of them young Black men, whom the draconian drug laws specifically target without mercy. Kerry backs the racist death penalty and mandatory minimum sentences.

A couple of weeks ago the Congressional Black Caucus jeered Ralph Nader when he spoke to them about his campaign, a bizarre reception for a man who has been a tireless advocate for civil rights and poor people. If this group of legislators actually cared about the welfare of their constituents, instead of merely their sinecure within the party, they would hire the twin dominatrixes of Abu Ghraib, Lyndie England and Sabrina Harman, to clip a dog leash on Kerry (who disgustingly said he'd like to become the second Black president) to interrogate him about his dreadful record on civil rights when he comes calling seeking their support. Of course, they won't. The Congressional Black Caucus is perhaps the only political conclave with clout as vaporous as the Greens.

Kerry, and his top adviser Rand Beers (a veteran of the Clinton and Bush National Security Council), crafted Plan Colombia, the brutal and toxic war on Andean peasants, waged for the benefit of oil companies under the phoney rubric of drug eradication. His scrawny energy plan, devoid of any real emphasis on conservation or solar power, calls for more offshore oil leasing, widespread natural gas drilling, transcontinental pipelines, and strip-mining for coal. His deficit-fixated economic policy, scripted by Wall Street bond tycoon Robert Rubin, is even more austere than Clinton's.

Like Joe Lieberman, Kerry markets himself as a cultural prude, regularly chiding teens about the kind of clothes they wear, the music they listen to, and the movies they

watch. But even Lieberman didn't go so far as to support the censorious Communications Decency Act. Kerry did. Fortunately, even this Supreme Court had the sense to strike the law down, ruling that it trampled across the First Amendment.

All of this is standard fare for contemporary Democrats. But Kerry always goes the extra mile. The senator cast a crucial vote for Clinton's wretched bill to dismantle welfare for poor mothers and their children and, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, he continues to hail the mean-spirited measure as a tremendous success.

This is merely a precis of the grim resume of the man the Green Party now supports through the proxy candidacy of David Cobb. The message of the Cobb campaign is: a vote for Cobb is a vote for Kerry. Translation: a vote for Cobb is a vote for war, and everything that goes along with it.

It's also a vote for political self-annihilation. David Cobb is the Jim Jones of the Green Party. Form a line and pass the Kool-Aid.

Risk-free voting? I wouldn't bet your life on it.

Why I Changed My Voter Registration Today

By Norman Solomon

Published on <http://www.commondreams.org>

June 28, 2004

This morning I mailed a form changing my party registration from "decline to state" to the Green Party. It's a tiny individual step in response to a hugely important collective action -- the party's decision at its National Convention to nominate David Cobb for president.

A majority of the delegates went for a candidate who relied on grassroots organizing and respectful debate. Cobb won the nomination after proving his capacity to engage in substantive dialogue with Green Party activists and other progressives. Without that capacity, he probably wouldn't have ended up taking his position in favor of a "safe states" approach to this year's presidential race.

How thoroughly Cobb and his running mate, Pat LaMarche, will implement such a strategy remains to be seen. Hopefully, history will record that in 2004 the Green ticket boosted the party's strength among progressives nationwide while making common cause with the wide array of movements determined to prevent a victory for the Bush-Cheney gang on Election Day.

As a practical matter, ending the George W. Bush presidency on November 2 will require sufficient votes for John Kerry in most of the twenty or so swing states: Oregon and Washington; Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado; Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; New Hampshire and Maine; West Virginia, Arkansas, and Louisiana; and, of course, Florida.

(Since I live in California, where Kerry is running twelve to fifteen points ahead of Bush, I'm safely voting for Cobb. But if I lived in one of the twenty closely fought swing states, I'd vote for Kerry.)

With the swing states all too close for comfort, activists should be emphatic that the Green Party's presidential campaign this year ought to concentrate its efforts on "safe states" -- where the Bush-Kerry race isn't close.

The Green Party should not be at cross purposes with the progressive movements struggling to end the Bush presidency. People in those movements will long remember, for good or ill, how the Green Party conducts itself between now and the day that seals the fate of the Bush White House.

One of the potential key benefits of Cobb's nomination is that he seems genuinely interested in hearing -- and being responsive to -- grassroots activists. This is a refreshing and vital departure for a Green Party presidential nominee. So, more than ever, it's time for activists to speak up.

If strategic thinking prevails, the possibility exists that the Green Party in 2004 will strengthen itself from the bottom up while also providing tangible solidarity in the national effort to defeat Bush. If the Green Party proves equal to this momentous task, it could open up new possibilities for the years and decades ahead.

A Reply to Norman Solomon and Medea Benjamin: Believing in a Green Resistance

By Todd Chretien Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>, July 26, 2004

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value.

-- Thomas Paine, *The Crisis*, 1776

The great immigrant revolutionary, abolitionist, and supporter of women's rights Thomas Paine made the point in 1776 that in order to win any meaningful battle, it is necessary not only to fight when it is easy. It is necessary to fight, and in fact, it is especially important to fight, when all "pragmatic" opinion counsels compromise, retreat, and surrender. Had Washington's army sued for peace in 1776 at Valley Forge, then the world's first representative democracy would never have been born.

Visionary abolitionist Frederick Douglass advised John Brown to abort his ill-fated raid on Harpers Ferry not because he opposed the rebellion, but because he believed it could not succeed in its tactics. However, when John Brown was executed by the slave power, Douglass lauded him as the "man who started the war that ended slavery."

In 1937, Congress of Industrial Organizations union leader John Lewis dared the government to break the auto sit-down strikes and "shoot him first." The auto bosses and Roosevelt backed down, and we can thank the Flint rebels for the remnants of unions we still have today.

Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man, touching off a direct-action movement that bucked those who advised to let the apartheid courts work with "all deliberate speed." The racist backlash was intense and led to the deaths, beatings, and jailings of thousands of young Black and white freedom fighters. But Jim Crow died as well.

Any serious consideration of American history shows that Thomas Paine was right. Independence, abolition, unions, civil rights, suffrage, abortion, Stonewall. All great rebellions and reforms came into being because the minority who advocated "unreasonable" demands refused to disorganize their forces under the pressure of majority opinion. Instead, they held to their principles, gathered their forces, weathered the storm, and showed friend and foe alike that "truth and not lies are the motor force of history."

Today, we are at an historical crossroads. Bush has set the world on fire. He has invaded Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti; cheered on the Israeli war against the Palestinians; shredded our civil liberties with the Patriot Act; and wants to codify his version of the Old Testament into a constitutional ban on gay marriage. He wants to outlaw abortion and doesn't believe in global warming. No doubt, he is a danger to the planet.

However, rather than opposing this madness, John Kerry has helped Bush light the matches. He voted for the invasions and wants to send more troops. He promises more, more, more of the same for Sharon's dirty war, and adds that we should get tough with Venezuela. He voted for the Patriot Act and vows to intensify the "war on terror" if elected. There are, of course, some differences. Kerry does not want to write his anti-gay marriage bigotry into the form of an amendment. He believes in global warming but thinks any radical action to reverse it will hurt American corporate power. He says he will appoint pro-abortion federal judges, but will follow Clinton's policy of slowly outlawing abortion to the young and the poor.

Unfortunately, many "sunshine patriots" are demanding that the antiwar movement that put over a million people in the streets in the spring of 2003 now line up behind a pro-war candidate. This is especially wrongheaded timing because the majority of the country is turning against the war and occupation. Medea Benjamin, Peter Coyote, Daniel Ellsberg, Tom Hayden, Barbara Ehrenreich, Norman Solomon, and many other liberal and progressive leaders tell us that a Kerry regime "would be less dangerous" than Bush. This may or may not be true. Remember, it was LBJ who escalated the war in

Vietnam, not Nixon. But, even if Kerry is "less dangerous," he will be more capable of wreaking havoc on Iraq, Palestine, Venezuela, abortion, gay rights, civil rights, and unions if we sacrifice our political movement to getting behind him.

Tragically, rather than building on the great start we made in 2000 when Ralph Nader won 2.7 million votes for peace and justice, many of the very same people who helped that effort are trying to wreck it this time around. Rather than encouraging the Green Party and all antiwar organizations, unions, and civil rights groups to unite for a progressive campaign aiming to get millions of votes, they are condoning, if not actually leading, a campaign to vilify as "Republican dupes" those movement organizers and ordinary people who believe Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo are right to fight for the chance to carry our mobilization for peace and justice into the ballot box.

In Los Angeles in 2000, Democratic Party leaders stood on the balcony of the Staples Center and watched the LAPD teargas thousands of protesters. It seems to me that if we can't build a movement that learns not to vote for a party that directs police assaults on us, we don't have much hope of ever building a political challenge to corporate America. No doubt, the debate over presidential tactics will sharply separate many of us who have worked closely together in the past and will again in the future. While all of us who want a better world should argue respectfully, debate we must because the stakes are too high to hold our tongues.

Norman Solomon wrote last month that he was registering Green precisely because its National Convention nominated a candidate who promised not to challenge the two-party system where it counts. He joins the chorus of liberal voices who warn us that "this is not the year." But he is wrong. As Paine, Douglass, Parks, Lewis, Malcolm, Mario, Gurley-Flynn, and countless others understood, any movement that ever aims to win must learn to stand up for itself precisely when it is darkest. That's the only way the millions of people who hate the system that oppresses them can ever gain confidence in us to join us and transform our movement from a minority affair of protest into a majority tide of power. For whatever my effort is worth, I am registering Green this year because most of the people I know in the Green Party refused, and are refusing, to submit to the duopoly blackmail. Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo can't change tile system by themselves, but every vote they receive will show the world that there are millions here in the United States who intend to conquer the hell of corporate power and the tyranny it rains down on the planet.

Hang on Citizen Paine, we're coming.

Growing the Green Party

By David Cobb
In These Times
July 16, 2004

Here's a story that you won't see in the corporate media: The Green Party is growing -- getting bigger, stronger, and better-organized in every election cycle. Even after the infamous 2000 presidential election, when the media and Democrats blamed us for

Bush's selection and ignored the blatantly illegal and biased behavior of Jeb Bush, Katherine Harris, and a Republican Supreme Court majority, our numbers have grown.

In 1996, the Green Party was organized in ten states, guaranteed a ballot line in just five, and had elected forty officeholders. Today, we have parties organized in forty-four states, twenty-three with guaranteed ballot access, and hundreds of Greens elected to public office, including the mayors of Santa Monica, California, and New Paltz, New York, and the president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. And, for the first time in our party's history, we have two registered Greens as our presidential and vice presidential candidates, myself and Patricia LaMarche, respectively.

The goals of the Cobb/LaMarche campaign are to present a genuine, progressive alternative, grow the Green Party, and have this year's election culminate with the removal of the White House's illegitimate occupant.

We are speaking truth to power in this campaign. We are the only party calling for decisive action on catastrophic global climate change and our addiction to fossil fuels, a living wage, universal health care under a national insurance plan, real steps toward racial equality, an end to the so-called USA PATRIOT Act, and the removal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

We are also confronting the "spoiler" issue head-on. When this question is raised, it provides us with an opportunity to talk about reforming a flawed electoral system. There isn't a spoiler problem. The problem is an antiquated, antidemocratic electoral system that forces people to vote for a candidate they really don't support in order to keep an even worse candidate out of office. We deserve a more democratic and more efficient electoral system, representing the diversity of people and opinions in our country.

Instant runoff voting (IRV) is one solution. IRV allows people to rank candidates in order of preference so that if your first-choice candidate doesn't win enough votes to make it into a runoff, your second-choice vote is automatically considered. IRV is used to elect officeholders in Australia, Ireland, and London, and is soon to be implemented in San Francisco. (Learn more about IRV, proportional representation, and other reforms to ensure fair elections on the Web site for the Center for Voting & Democracy at <http://www.fairvote.org>.)

Third parties have played a critical role throughout American history. In their heyday, third parties elected mayors, governors, and members of Congress. In fact, the entire social fabric of our society was woven from ideas that originated within third parties: the abolition of slavery, women's right to vote, Social Security, the 40-hour workweek and the direct election of U.S. senators, to name just a few.

What we are trying to accomplish through our work with the Green Party is greater than anyone campaign or anyone election. We are in this for the long haul. One of the key steps to growing our party and eliminating a dangerous global threat is ensuring the removal of George W. Bush from office. Bush is a huge problem. But he is not the problem. The problem is a corporate-military-industrial-prison-judicial system that is destroying the planet. We need to address the larger problem, but we also need to

remove the most immediate threat to global peace -- and that means getting Bush out of office.

I am in no way suggesting that anyone vote for John Kerry. Kerry is a corporatist and a militarist who supported the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the passage of the Patriot Act. He also opposes real universal health care and a living wage. However, although the differences between Bush and Kerry may be incremental, they are not inconsequential.

In forty or so states the electoral college votes have, for all intents and purposes, already been cast. For example, Massachusetts, California, and New York will go to the Democrats; Utah, Wyoming, and Texas to the Republicans. In these states, where our message is "Don't waste your vote," a vote for the Green Party is a powerful tool. In the battleground states that will decide the election, we understand if you won't vote for our ticket this time. That's okay. A vote is a powerful and personal decision. You can register Green and support us in every other way possible, especially with votes for state and local Green candidates and contributions of your time and money.

With the strategy we have articulated, we will grow the Green Party, provide voters with a genuine alternative, and make the world a safer and saner place to live.

Rigged Convention, Divided Party: How David Cobb Became the Green Nominee Even Though He Only Got 12 Percent of the Votes

By Carol Miller and Forrest Hill

Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>

August 7, 2004

How did David Cobb become the Green Party presidential nominee against the overwhelming majority of the Green Party?

The answer is quite simple. The Green Party followed a policy that is fundamentally undemocratic and allowed the will of its members to be manipulated.

Primaries: The Will of the Voter

In five states, registered Green Party members, who are the rank and file of the party, had the opportunity to vote in a presidential primary. These five primaries represent the majority of registered Greens in the country.

The five primaries took place in California, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Washington, D.C., and Rhode Island. The total number of votes cast for a presidential candidate as recorded by Ballot Access News was 45,733.

The results from these primaries for the leading three candidates are as follows:

Camejo / 33,255 / 72.7 percent

Cobb / 5,569 / 12.2 percent

Salzman / 4,953 / 10.8 percent

Others / 1,956 / 4.2 percent

In the three largest states, California, Massachusetts, and New Mexico, David Cobb was defeated. In California he was beaten six to one by Camejo, and Lorna Salzman almost tied him for second place. In Massachusetts he was beaten by Lorna Salzman and in New Mexico by Carol Miller. Both Lorna Salzman and Carol Miller endorsed the Nader/Camejo campaign.

In D.C., Cobb received 37 percent of all votes cast. The total number of votes cast in the Washington, D.C., primary, including write-in votes, was 374. Cobb faced only one local opponent, yet received only 138 votes!

In Rhode Island, the one state in which Cobb actually won more than 50 percent of the vote, only eighty-nine votes were cast. The primary ballot included only Kent Mesplay and Cobb. It did not even include New York's presidential nominee, Lorna Salzman. The vote was seventy-one for Cobb and eighteen for Mesplay.

Overall, the total primary vote for candidates who support Nader/Camejo was over 83 percent compared to Cobb's 12.2 percent. Where Greens actually were able to vote, Cobb was roundly defeated.

Nominating Meetings: The Will of the Few and Selected

In all other states Green Party delegates were chosen at nominating meetings. These meetings varied in size but were overall quite small. The national Green Party Web site never reported the number of votes cast at any of the state nominating meetings. This cover-up, whether intentional or not, hid from Greens the small number of voters that were determining how large numbers of delegates were proportioned between the candidates.

Nor did the Web site explain the delegate formula or justify the size of each state's delegation so that Greens could follow the process. In fact the formula completely ignores the number of Greens registered in each state as a determinant for the number of delegates. Most Greens assumed that delegates were proportioned according to a one person, one vote system as any democratic organization would normally assume.

Only the Cobb campaign organized a turnout of their supporters for these nominating meetings. This enabled Cobb to appear to have a higher percentage of support than he would gain if local Greens had an easier way of expressing their views, such as a primary.

In caucuses where the turnout was relatively large, Cobb often did poorly. But in some cases Cobb supporters were able to get around their low vote count by packing the delegation selection. For example, in Maine, where Nader's name was on the ballot, Nader defeated Cobb 52–42 (the remaining sixty-five votes went to thirteen other candidates). These votes represent 33 percent for Nader and 26 percent for Cobb. Yet during the vote at the convention in Milwaukee, eighteen out of nineteen Maine delegates voted for Cobb and one voted for Nader, or 95 percent for Cobb and 5 percent for Nader.

Democratic Violation of "One Person, One Vote"

Even this one-sided, basically one-candidate campaign could never have led to a Cobb victory at the convention without the help of a second undemocratic factor. The Green Party does not use a one person, one vote system but instead has an electoral college system that punishes states like California for its success in recruiting tens of thousands of Greens, while rewarding states that have only a small membership. Unlike the national electoral college, the Green Party's weighted voting gives some states hundreds of times more votes per Green member than other states.

For example, in Iowa there is officially no Green Party. The state liquidated it after they failed to reach the 2 percent threshold for their gubernatorial candidate in 2002. However, Iowa had nine delegates to the Green Party convention. There are ninety people registered as Greens in Iowa and over 150,000 registered Greens in California. Thus, in Iowa for every ten registered Green Party members there was one delegate to the nominating convention. If the party were to weigh all its members equally, then California would have received over 16,500 delegates instead of 132. The ninety Greens in Iowa had as much power in the party as 11,363 members in California.

Imagine a party in which candidate A gets 11,300 votes and candidate B gets 90 votes, and candidate B is declared the winner. Unfortunately, that party's name was the Green Party at the Milwaukee convention.

It is disturbing that while the Green Party platform opposes the electoral college and favors "one person, one vote," it does not practice what it preaches. Without the undemocratic voting process implemented by the national coordinating committee, Cobb had no chance of winning after the primary vote in California and the heavy opposition to his candidacy in other major states like New York and New Jersey.

Denying Candidates the Right to Appoint Their Delegates

But even taking into account this undemocratic ratio of representation that worked mightily for Cobb, he was still unable to win outright. He just didn't have enough delegates. To win the nomination, his supporters were allowed to alter the decisions of the small state meetings and primaries. This last nondemocratic step was achieved because Green Party rules do not allow a candidate chosen by its rank and file to appoint their delegates like all other parties have in American history. The only requirement for becoming a delegate is simply having the ability to attend the convention. Thus, whichever candidate can get their supporters to the convention can

end up winning regardless of the votes of the primaries or caucuses, as in Maine.

In this manner Cobb was able to take delegate votes from other candidates. This was achieved simply by having his supporters show up and cast their votes for him after the first round of voting. Examples where this practice was highly evident include Maine, Missouri, California, and Texas.

In Maryland, two Cobb delegates attempted to become a Nader delegate and a Carol Miller delegate prior to the convention. They were only stopped because a Nader supporter prevented them from doing so by making it publicly clear that they were in fact Cobb supporters.

In California Cobb supporters were able to turn his 12 percent support in the primaries into a delegate vote of 26 percent by packing the delegation. Specifically, twenty-two votes shifted to Cobb during the second round of voting. These votes are equal to the margin by which Cobb won the election.

In effect the Green Party picks its presidential candidate not based on the will of its members but by discriminating against Greens in some states, and in the end, by allowing anyone to become a delegate who can show up at the convention. Cobb's support at most reflects but a small percentage of Greens. The overwhelming majority of the rank-and-file members opposed his candidacy.

Fighting Back

Cobb's amazing rise from 12 percent in the primaries against 83 percent for pro-Nader candidates to a majority at the convention was due to a well-organized campaign to turn a minority view in the Green Party into what appeared as a majority decision at the convention.

Behind the Cobb phenomenon is a very real political difference in the Green Party. As many articles have pointed out, the party is divided between those who want to oppose the two parties of money and those who support voting for the lesser of two evils to help prevent a Republican victory. Cobb represents a political capitulation away from our independence from the two corporate-controlled parties.

The nomination of Cobb is a step backward, away from an uncompromising challenge to the two-party "duopoly" and away from the prominence that the Greens have achieved, thanks in good part to Nader's 2000 campaign. It is time we take back the Green Party from those who want to capitulate to the Democratic Party!

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 7:59 pm**

PART 3 OF 3

A Response to Miller and Hill

By Dean Myerson

August 11, 2004

Carol Miller and Forrest Hill have distributed an attack article that spreads lies about the Green Party's convention in Milwaukee and the broader nomination process, in order to provide cover for seeking the Green Party of California's ballot line for the Nader/Camejo campaign, now that their ballot drive has failed. I am normally one who is opposed to responding to these attacks as we have a campaign to run. But this article has spread wide and now threatens to dismember the Green Party, a cost that Peter Camejo and some Nader supporters are apparently willing to pay in order to get ballot lines.

I personally call on Ralph Nader to disavow this article and any attempts to get Green Party ballot lines that are based on it. His surrogates are using the same tactics against the Green Party that the Democratic Party is using against him. He is staying above the fray, just as John Kerry is, regarding attacks on him.

Please read carefully, and as always, beware those who claim mandates unproven by any vote. Miller and Hill are quoted in straight text. I respond in italics.

Primaries -- The Will of the Voter

In five states, registered Green Party members, who are the rank and file of the party, had the opportunity to vote in a presidential primary. These five primaries represent the majority of registered Greens in the country.

Voters cannot legally register as Greens or the state will not divulge that count in 27 states. These Greens are disenfranchised if Green registration is the criterion. Such a disenfranchising also overrepresents those who would get to vote if registration was the sole criterion. Also, some states prioritize registration because it impacts the ability to run candidates. California prioritizes registration because they can keep a ballot line by doing so, another reason California would be overrepresented if only party registration is used.

The five primaries took place in California, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Washington, D.C., and Rhode Island. The total number of votes cast for a presidential candidate as recorded by Ballot Access News was 45,733.

The results from these primaries for the leading three candidates are as follows:

Camejo / 33,255 / 72.7 percent

Cobb / 5,569 / 12.2 percent

Salzman / 4,953 / 10.8 percent

Others / 1,956 / 4.2 percent

Ralph Nader was not listed as a candidate on any of these ballots. Peter Camejo was listed as a candidate for the Green presidential ballot. None were listed as independent candidates. It is a basic matter that we cannot assume anything of voter intent except what was on the ballot. Greens in some of these states who voted for Camejo have specifically complained that they did not vote for Nader and do not want their vote interpreted this way. Furthermore, if California Greens were in the same position as Greens in most of the country, in that they were being asked to vote for independent candidates who would not commit to use their ballot line, even those who now support Nader/Camejo might think differently. For Nader/Camejo to commit to run on a Green line only in California (and maybe a few other states) is fundamentally divisive for the Green Party. All of our state parties want a candidate for their Green ballot line. California Greens need to recognize what it is Nader/Camejo were asking of Greens elsewhere in the country at the convention: that they give up their right to have a presidential candidate so that California could have its preferred choice. Either that, or have a "no decision" convention that would undermine the purpose of having a national party.

In the three largest states, California, Massachusetts, and New Mexico David Cobb was defeated. In California he was beaten six to one by Camejo, and Lorna Salzman almost tied him for second place. In Massachusetts he was beaten by Lorna Salzman and in New Mexico by Carol Miller. Both Lorna Salzman and Carol Miller endorsed the Nader/Camejo campaign.

And none of these people ended up seeking the Green nomination. Thus, those delegates should be freed to vote their conscience, unless the Green Party prefers to let a few individuals tell delegates how to vote, independent of the will of voters.

In D.C., Cobb received 37 percent of all votes cast. The total number of votes cast in the Washington, D.C., primary, including write-in votes, was 374. Cobb faced only one local opponent, yet received only 138 votes!

In the Rhode Island primary, the one state in which Cobb actually won more than 50 percent of the vote, only eighty-nine votes were cast. The primary ballot included only Kent Mesplay and Cobb. It did not even include New York's presidential nominee, Lorna Salzman. The vote was seventy-one for Cobb and eighteen for Mesplay.

Overall, the total primary vote for candidates who support Nader/Camejo was over 83 percent compared to Cobb's 12.2 percent. Where Greens actually were able to vote, Cobb was roundly defeated.

Again, votes were cast for candidates who support Nader, votes were not cast for Nader, nor were they cast for an independent candidate. The votes for candidates who were a stand-in for Nader are not valid as votes for Nader. We cannot manipulate the intention of voters. We can only go by what was written on the ballot.

Readers might do well to talk to some Greens in Rhode Island, where support for Nader used to be strong. When he refused to commit to use their ballot line, his support

decreased.

Nominating Meetings: The Will of the Few and Selected

In all other states Green Party delegates were chosen at nominating meetings. These meetings varied in size but were overall quite small. The national Green Party Web site never reported the number of votes cast at any of the state nominating meetings. This cover-up, whether intentional or not, hid from Greens the small number of voters that were determining how large numbers of delegates were proportioned between the candidates.

They were smaller but they were informed as to what the candidates were actually running for. When people knew that Camejo and Salzman were not actually seeking the Green nomination, they did not vote for them in most states. What this result actually shows is that Greens wanted a Green candidate, and one for their own ballot lines.

Nor did the Web site explain the delegate formula or justify the size of each state's delegation so that Greens could follow the process. In fact the formula completely ignores the number of Greens registered in each state as a determinant for the number of delegates. Most Greens assumed that delegates were proportioned according to a one person, one vote system, as any democratic organization would normally assume.

The formula does not use registered Greens because by law registered Greens in twenty-seven states cannot be counted. It does use population, statewide Green candidate voting history, elected Green count, and the Green Party's Coordinating Committee voting strength as factors.

Only the Cobb campaign organized a turnout of their supporters for these nominating meetings. This enabled Cobb to appear to have a higher percentage of support than he would gain if local Greens had an easier way of expressing their views, such as a primary.

The Cobb campaign organized to ask for and win the nomination. Is there a problem with this? Why didn't the Nader/Camejo campaign do so? Did they think the Green Party owed them a nomination or endorsement, just as the Democratic Party thinks they own our votes?

In caucuses where the turnout was relatively large, Cobb often did poorly. But in some cases Cobb supporters were able to get around their low vote count by packing the delegation selection. For example, in Maine, where Nader's name was on the ballot, Nader defeated Cobb 52-42 (the remaining sixty-five votes went to thirteen other candidates). These votes represent 33 percent for Nader and 26 percent for Cobb. Yet during the vote at the convention in Milwaukee, eighteen out of nineteen Maine delegates voted for Cobb, and one voted for Nader, or 95 percent for Cobb and 5 percent for Nader.

Nader told some Maine Greens early on that he would run on the Green line in Maine, so they supported him. When it became clear that he would not do this, they changed their mind.

Democratic Violation of "One Person, One Vote"

Even this one-sided, basically one-candidate campaign could never have led to a Cobb victory at the convention without the help of a second undemocratic factor. The Green Party does not use a one person, one vote system but instead has an electoral college system that punishes states like California for its success in recruiting tens of thousands of Greens, while rewarding states that have only a small membership. Unlike the national electoral college, the Green Party's weighted voting gives some states hundreds of times more votes per Green member than other states.

As all national organizations do, the Green Party uses representative democracy at the national level. It always has. This has never been a problem before. The difference in ratio is because not all states have party registration as described above. It has always been acknowledged that states that have dues-paying members will have fewer than they do registered Greens. Some states have both, and the ratio is quite large between signed-up members and registrants. Different forms of membership in our state parties make national representation complex.

For example, in Iowa there is officially no Green Party. The state liquidated it after they failed to reach the 2 percent threshold for their gubernatorial candidate in 2002. However, Iowa had nine delegates to the Green Party Convention. There are ninety people registered as Greens in Iowa and over 150,000 registered Greens in California. Thus, for every ten registered Green Party members there was one delegate to the nominating convention. If the party were to weigh all its members equally, then California would have received over 16,500 delegates instead of 132. The ninety Greens in Iowa had as much power in the party as 11,363 members in California.

The Iowa Green Party has not been "liquidated"; it is a political organization under state law and has no registered Greens, because it is not allowed to by law. Iowa Greens contacted the Nader campaign months ago and asked if he would run on a Green line in Iowa, and he said he would decide after the convention. With this, many Iowa Greens supported David Cobb, who would commit to run on their line.

Imagine a party in which candidate A gets 11,300 votes and candidate B gets 90 votes, and candidate B is declared the winner. Unfortunately, that party's name was the Green Party at the Milwaukee convention.

It's good that you refer to candidate A getting 11,300 votes. Nader got no votes because he was not listed on any primary ballot by his choice. Therefore, we have no way of knowing how many Greens would support his independent campaign.

It is disturbing that while the Green Party platform opposes the electoral college and favors "one person, one vote," it does not practice what it preaches. Without the undemocratic voting process implemented by the national coordinating committee, Cobb had no chance of winning after the primary vote in California and the heavy opposition to his candidacy in other major states like New York and New Jersey.

The Green Party has always used representative democracy at the national level. The

formula for representation in Milwaukee was approved in 2003 and there were no complaints that it was an "electoral college" then. This complaint only appeared after the Nader/Camejo campaign lost.

Denying Candidates the Right to Appoint Their Delegates

But even taking into account this undemocratic ratio of representation that worked mightily for Cobb, he was still unable to win outright. He just didn't have enough delegates. To win the nomination, his supporters were allowed to alter the decisions of the small state meetings and primaries. This last non-democratic step was achieved because Green Party rules do not allow a candidate chosen by its rank and file to appoint their delegates like all other parties have in American history. The only requirement for becoming a delegate is simply having the ability to attend the convention. Thus, whichever candidate can get their supporters to the convention can end up winning regardless of the votes of the primaries or caucuses, as in Maine.

Green state parties choose their own process for choosing delegates. This is not controlled by the national party. From those states that I saw, they attempted to choose delegates that support the named candidate. Did the Nader/Camejo campaign offer to pay the way for their own delegates? The reason why Nader/Camejo did not select their delegates is that they did not campaign for the nomination.

In this manner Cobb was able to take delegate votes from other candidates. This was achieved simply by having his supporters show up and cast their votes for him after the first round of voting. Examples where this practice was highly evident include Maine, Missouri, California, and Texas.

Or maybe they changed their mind? Voting by round assumes that votes will change from round to round. I have talked to some delegates who changed their mind to support David Cobb in the second round, and they all had specific reasons, generally dealing with how Camejo campaigned for the nomination. Some Nader supporters have confirmed that Camejo's very negative campaign against David Cobb hurt his cause and converted some Camejo supporters to Cobb supporters.

Furthermore, in an interview with FoxNews.com that is still linked on Peter Camejo's Avocado Education Project Web site, he says that he wants Greens to make their own choice at the convention. He has been quoted as saying early on that his delegates should be considered uncommitted. Now he says it is betrayal for them to not vote for him. Why the change?

In Maryland, two Cobb delegates attempted to become a Nader delegate and a Carol Miller delegate prior to the convention. They were only stopped because a Nader supporter prevented them from doing so by making it publicly clear that they were in fact Cobb supporters.

In California, Cobb supporters were able to turn his 12 percent support in the primaries into a delegate vote of 26 percent by packing the delegation. Specifically, twenty-two votes shifted to Cobb during the second round of voting. These votes are equal to the margin by which Cobb won the election.

As stated above, they did so because of how Camejo behaved. A speaker was permitted to personally attack Cobb at a Camejo rally. Camejo badgered delegates to vote the way he wanted them to, rather than respectfully convincing them. Many delegates have complained about this.

In effect the Green Party picks its presidential candidate not based on the will of its members but by discriminating against Greens in some states, and in the end, by allowing anyone to become a delegate who can show up at the convention. Cobb's support at most reflects but a small percentage of Greens. The overwhelming majority of the rank-and-file members oppose his candidacy.

By what vote was it determined that an overwhelming majority of the rank and file oppose the Cobb candidacy?

Fighting Back

Cobb's amazing rise from 12 percent in the primaries against 83 percent for pro-Nader candidates to a majority at the convention was due to a well-organized campaign to turn a minority view in the Green Party into what appeared as a majority decision at the convention.

It was due to a well-organized campaign, period. It was a campaign that visited Greens in forty states, a campaign that actually asked for the nomination, and a campaign that stayed positive. A campaign that built the Green Party, as many Greens have written to us to confirm. There was essentially no campaign for a Nader endorsement until one week before the convention.

Behind the Cobb phenomenon is a very real political difference in the Green Party. As many articles have pointed out, the party is divided between those who want to oppose the two parties of money and those who support voting for the lesser of two evils to help prevent a Republican victory. Cobb represents a political capitulation away from our independence from the two corporate-controlled parties.

What the political differences are has no impact on the process used at the convention. Nader has repeatedly said he wants to make the Democratic Party better, that he wants to beat Bush. Even that he wants to coordinate with Kerry to beat Bush. The latter is from a CNN transcript of a Nader interview with Wolf Blitzer. There is no capitulation.

The nomination of Cobb is a step backward, away from an uncompromising challenge to the two-party "duopoly" and away from the prominence that the Greens have achieved, thanks in good part to Nader's 2000 campaign. It is time we take back the Green Party from those who want to capitulate to the Democratic Party!

This article is a response to a weak ballot-access drive by Nader. He now needs to undermine the Green Party convention in order to give cause to state parties to ignore the result of the convention. No formal complaints about the convention process have been filed with the national party.

Cut and Run: The Green Party 2004 Convention

By Peter Miguel Camejo August 17, 2004

Just prior to the opening of the Green Party National Convention in June of 2004 David Cobb, the soon-to-be Green Party presidential candidate, stated on Democracy Now!, "you can't cut and run" in response to a question from Amy Goodman on why he calls for continued occupation of Iraq by the United States on his campaign Web site. Cobb repeated a phrase, "you can't cut and run," made famous by both Bush and Kerry, to justify continued U.S. occupation of Iraq.

How did it come to pass that the Green Party, pledged to support peace and to oppose the Democrats' and Republicans' occupation in Iraq, nominated a candidate who only days before the convention was defending the imperialist occupation of Iraq on national radio? Cobb's position stood against that of 99 percent -- if not 100 percent -- of Green Party members, not to mention the overwhelming majority of the people on our planet.

The Green Party 2004 convention itself was a turn away from its founding principles; it represented a move by forces within the Green Party to "cut and run" from its own platform under the attacks of the Democratic Party to silence the Green Party.

The Green Party was founded because the two major corporate-run parties do not represent the interests of humanity. Their policies continue to support an endless march away from democracy toward war, to promote oppression and global exploitation, and to destroy the ecological systems needed to sustain life. The Green Party's goal was to offer an alternative to the two major parties, and to do so it developed a set of Ten Key Values upon which the party platform was based.

In the 1990s, thousands joined the Green Party and a few Green candidates were elected to city councils and school boards. Then in 2000, Ralph Nader, a nationally known figure with great popularity, became the Green Party's presidential candidate. Millions voted for the Green Party and everything changed. Tens of thousands joined the party. The number of candidates elected to office began to rise sharply. Suddenly the Green Party went from a curiosity to a threat to the two-party system.

Democrats Attack

The Democrats launched an offensive against the Green Party and Ralph Nader, accusing them of being responsible for the victory of George Bush. Green Party members have reacted in many different ways to these attacks. Some think we should run candidates only in local races while supporting a "lesser evil" strategy of voting for Democratic nominees in state and national elections. Others have taken a stance that the attacks on the Green Party represent an attempt to silence us and curtail democracy, and that therefore we should fight back.

Of the two currents that have appeared in the Green Party as a result of these attacks,

one offers capitulation and the other resistance as the solution. These two opposing views have divided the Green Party.

This rift has been widened by the intensity of the Democratic Party's attacks against Ralph Nader. These attacks reached a level never before seen in American history when Nader announced he was again running for president instead of capitulating, on a platform in harmony with the Green Party.

The Politics of Capitulation

David Cobb, a relatively unknown figure in the United States and also in the Green Party, began a campaign whose central purpose was to disassociate from Nader and try to dodge Democratic Party attacks by disappearing under the radar. His campaign strategy of encouraging Green Party members to vote for the Democrats in contested states is a not-so-subtle form of capitulation. He called this strategy the "safe state" strategy.

This position was backed by a group of eighteen Green Party members, including some longtime leaders, in a statement urging Greens to adopt a "lesser evil" voting strategy.

Cobb went further and suggested a "safe state" strategy would actually help build the Green Party. He concluded that by avoiding attacks from the Democrats, the Green Party could grow at the grassroots level. Cobb promised supporters he would use his campaign to disassociate Greens from Nader and help the Greens grow by focusing only on local campaigns. In the past year, he has traveled throughout the nation, giving press interviews attacking Nader and letting people know he wants Kerry to win. He made a point of going to small Green state organizations, assuring them that he was the only candidate really concerned about grassroots organizing.

Cobb developed the slogan "Green and Growing," using the empirical fact that the party was growing, to make his campaign appear pro-Green as opposed to simply anti-Nader. His analysis, however, completely turns reality upside-down. The party has grown precisely because it rejected his views and ran Nader for president in 2000, stood up to the Democrats' charge of spoilers, and has run aggressive campaigns for statewide offices, U.S. Senate, Congress, mayor, and other local offices.

The Green Party primaries revealed the overwhelming majority of Greens did not support Cobb. In those states where primaries were held, representing the majority of registered Greens, Cobb received only 12.2 percent of the vote, while candidates supporting Nader received over 80 percent of the votes cast by Green Party members.

Most Greens knew the party had grown like never before precisely because of Nader's national campaign. Nationally there was a great deal of suspicion to Cobb's "safe state" strategy so he began calling it different names, such as "smart states," "investing your vote," and "voting your conscience," but in every case it simply means voting for John Kerry.

As the Democrats intensified their attacks, many Greens became aware that building the Green Party was not so easy. The Democrats have an enormous influence on liberal

intellectuals, who have joined in a massive campaign against Nader and the Green Party. Something called "Green Democrats" began appearing on special Web sites as part of a campaign to silence the Greens. Cobb soon found a strong base of support for his campaign among the Kerry backers within the party. The Democratic Party media began to see him as an ally in their campaign against Nader and to domesticate the Green Party.

Cobb's running mate, Pat LaMarche, gave her own "cut-and-run" strategy in an article in Green Horizon, published just prior to the convention, in which she wrote, "Maybe the entire green movement can slip under the radar while folks monitor all this hullabaloo about the presidential race." In her first interview following the convention, LaMarche stated she would vote for the Democrat, Kerry, not Cobb, even though she was Cobb's vice presidential candidate. LaMarche later said she had been misquoted.

Alliance with the Democrats

Medea Benjamin, a Green Party member from California and a supporter of the "lesser evil" strategy, made an appeal for Greens to support Cobb and called for a coalition with the Democrats.

Greens are involved in coalitions with Democrats, and sometimes Republicans, on specific issues all the time. Occasionally a local Democratic Party group will endorse a march for gay marriage or for peace. In fact, Medea's work through Global Exchange, a nonprofit, is itself supported by a coalition of people with various political viewpoints; i.e., Greens, Democrats, and independents working together on specific issues related to fair trade. But elections and the question of who should govern are different than forming coalitions on issues.

Political parties have platforms and represent social layers. The Democrats represent corporate America. That is a fundamental reason why the Green Party exists. The one alliance we cannot make with the Democrats is on who should govern, because we believe that people, not money, should run the United States.

People who join the Democratic Party or who call for people to vote for it are crossing the line between people and money. That is why I call it capitulation to call for a vote for Kerry. Democrats often make it a general condition that for them to minimally support progressive causes, progressives must accept voting for the Democratic Party. This often leads to organizations like trade unions and environmentalist groups becoming prisoners of the Democrats. They can protest their hearts out, but when the chips are down they have to vote for pro-corporate candidates like Kerry and Edwards, otherwise the Democrats will turn on them.

Why Not Join the Democrats?

David Cobb and Medea Benjamin do not agree with Dennis Kucinich's call that all Greens abandon their party and join the Democrats and work to reform it. Instead they want the Greens to become an ally to those working within the Democratic Party. They see the Green Party agreeing not to run against certain Democrats, endorsing other Democrats, and in some cases voting for Democrats such as Kerry and then in turn the

Democrats will agree not to attack us. In that sense they see the Green Party as a pressure group on the Democrats, as part of the Democratic Party family and an ally to the more "progressive" Democrats.

That is why Cobb's victory at the Green Party convention was hailed by Democrats and supporters of Kerry generally from The Nation to the Milwaukee daily newspaper.

The problem with this "make peace with the Democrats" view is that to create systematic change, progressives have to break with the Democratic Party. That is becoming clear to millions of people. Twenty-five percent of the electorate is no longer registered Democrat or Republican. Tens of millions of people are leaving the two-party system. The youth are starting to break. In fact, one out of every eight youth, 12 percent, say they will vote for Nader.

The Green Party 2004 convention chose formally to turn their backs on the youth who are rebelling against the two parties of war and backing Nader. The Cobb/Benjamin supporters favor an alliance with the Democrats, not with the antiwar youth. The Green Party cannot be built under a strategy of coalition with the Democrats. We will not inspire young voters to join our party by calling for voters to support pro-war, pro-corporate candidates like Kerry.

The New Party tried to use the strategy of developing an alliance with the Democratic Party to build a third-party movement. They supported the Democrats and the Democrats let them exist. But members who wanted to support Democrats found it easier to simply join the Democratic Party, and those who wanted a third party went toward the Greens, so the New Party collapsed. A similar end awaits the Green Party if it continues to follow a "lesser evil" voting strategy.

The Green Resistance

The good news is that a majority of active Green Party members do not agree with David Cobb. The broader membership voted massively against him in the primaries.

Cobb's victory at the convention itself is an issue the Green Party will have to struggle with. It highlights the fact that the Green Party does not follow its own views on democracy. The Green Party theoretically stands for "one person, one vote," yet in its internal decision-making process at the convention it opposed one person, one vote. The Green Party opposes the electoral college, yet imposed an extreme electoral college system in determining how delegates were chosen.

At the 2004 convention, the Green Party allowed whoever could make it to the convention to be seated as a delegate. Many of them voted for a presidential candidate without any respect for the wishes of the rank and file expressed in the primaries and state conventions. Such methods allow a candidate to pack meetings and conventions to turn a minority into a majority, as occurred at the 2004 convention.

Avocados

In response to the capitulationism wing of the Green Party, another wing, called the

"avocados," has arisen who support the Avocado Declaration and oppose supporting Kerry.

This wing of the party was inspired, not turned off, by Ralph Nader's courage not to bend to the relentless attacks by Democrats against the Green Party. Instead of "cut and run" under the radar, Nader chose to stand against the war, and the Patriot Act and defend working people throughout the United States as visibly as possible.

The polls show eight to ten million people backing Nader. The majority of active Green Party members side with Nader, refuse to turn their back on the ten million people backing Nader, and are working to help Nader's campaign. This includes some of the best-known Greens, such as Matt Gonzalez, president of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, and Jason West, the mayor of New Paltz, New York.

Party Unity

The avocados offered a unity proposal at the convention so that both points of view within the party could coexist and debate over the different approaches could continue. The lesser-evil current, the supporters of Cobb, would not agree to the unity proposal because their agenda was to deal Nader a blow. To them, a dual endorsement for Nader and Cobb was still an endorsement of Nader. The Cobb supporters showed no remorse that they were winning the convention against the will of the majority of Greens. Quite the contrary, they were overjoyed at their success in working the undemocratic system within the Green Party to overcome the majority view and achieve a minority victory for Cobb.

The Democrats immediately congratulated them for their efforts. The convention adjourned, and Cobb supporters like Medea Benjamin went off to campaign for Kerry. LaMarche went off to assure the Democrats she would vote for Kerry, and Cobb went off to try and strengthen the pro-Democratic Party wing of the party. The Greens resisting the Democrats went off to campaign for Nader, starting with a rally of one thousand supporters in San Francisco that was hosted by Matt Gonzalez, to affirm their commitment to the Nader/Camejo campaign for peace and social justice.

Organizational Issues

There were several important issues regarding democracy at the convention. One issue was a loyalty oath. It turns out the Green Party proposed delegates had to sign a loyalty oath that they would not oppose whoever got the party nomination. The idea that Greens should ever sign loyalty oaths on issues of one's political views is alien to the very idea of the Green Party. Pressure from various states forced the oath to be dropped.

An effort not to allow some of the presidential candidates to address the conference was overcome by opposition from delegates. The Cobb supporters tried to oppose allowing some candidates to speak, especially the two women candidates, Lorna Salzman and Carol Miller, both Nader supporters. When faced with strong opposition, Cobb himself proposed that the solution was to have no candidate speak at the convention!

The rules at the convention allowed a candidate that did not have a majority to win the nomination. This was also supported by Cobb backers. But under pressure from Matt Gonzalez, Cobb backed off and said he would not accept the nomination without a majority of delegates. It is amazing that the Green Party, which opposes allowing any candidate to win without a majority and supports IRV elections, considered allowing their nominee for president to be picked without a majority of the voting delegates.

There are many other issues that need to be dealt with to turn the Green Party into a democratic organization that respects the votes of its rank and file and does not allow a minority to overrule the majority, as happened in 2004. The Green Party will either become an internally democratic organization, develop a clear separation from the Democratic Party, or it will decline. For the Green Party to continue to grow it must actually be Green, independent and democratic.

The victory of a minority faction that supports capitulating to the Democrats in the 2004 elections is a major threat to the future of the Green Party. The next few years will undoubtedly be a period of internal struggle for democracy and to defend the original purpose and platform of the party.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 8:31 pm**

Part 1 of 2

CHAPTER FOUR

Independence versus Anybody But Bush

Why Vote for Ralph Nader?

By Matt Gonzalez

San Francisco Examiner

July 14, 2004

These days it's popular, particularly in progressive circles, to attack presidential candidate Ralph Nader and his running mate, Peter Camejo.

Votes for Nader would likely otherwise go to Sen. John Kerry, and so the fear is that President Bush will be reelected -- a possibility that naturally engenders strong feelings. But why is the right solution to attack Nader, who genuinely holds views different from those of Kerry and Bush? After all, Nader and Camejo are simply running for public office in a democracy.

The problem isn't that Nader and Camejo represent a duplicative platform, or fail to address issues being ignored by the two major parties -- it's simply that their running cannot be accommodated within our two-party system. So the answer, for many, is that they shouldn't run. But why make the solution an undemocratic one? Why not insist that the system be changed?

Do you really think it's an accident that the Democrats can't come up with a solution to the spoiler problem? Ask yourself, have they spent four years trying to reform the electoral college? Or calling for majority elections so that we don't get a repeat of Florida -- an election decided by a plurality victory? Why blame Nader?

One need only look at the two major candidates for president to see how much of a failure our political system is. On virtually every issue of significance, the candidates appear to be in agreement.

For instance, they both supported the war in Iraq (although Kerry believes Bush is mishandling matters and would like twenty thousand more troops in the region), and both supported the Patriot Act (arguably the worst attack on civil liberties this country has seen in the last half-century). Both opposed the Kyoto Accords, which would have begun to address global warming, and both supported the World Trade Organization agreements, which subjugate our national and local interests to international commercial ones. Neither supports gay marriage, and even concerning the abortion question, Kerry says he'll appoint anti-abortion judges to the federal courts (but he says he'll make sure they don't want to repeal Roe v. Wade).

So, who is kidding whom? The progressives who are self-righteous in their condemnation of Nader, or those who believe the Democrats are not an opposition party?

Continuing to excuse the Democrats for not addressing the spoiler problem only ensures that the problem will not get fixed. Excusing Kerry from making concessions in this regard before you vote for him likewise ensures that the problem will not get fixed. Participating in attacks on Nader for running only props up an undemocratic system that must be reformed.

The stakes are not one presidential race, but rather whether a diversity of ideas will ever reach Congress. Without this reform there will only ever be one congressperson with the courage to oppose the war in Afghanistan. There will only be one senator to vote against the Patriot Act. This state of affairs is so bleak that pretending there is an opposition party in our two-party system can only charitably be called foolish. I hate to say it, but it's true.

Those who continue to say that Nader ruined the 2000 election ignore that over 7 million Democrats voted for Bush -- 250,000 of them in Florida. They ignore that sixty-six hundred votes in Palm Beach were spoiled by a butterfly ballot designed by a Democrat. Instead, they attack Nader, who has dedicated his entire adult life to fighting for consumer and civil rights. He has been a stalwart against growing corporate power. His running mate, Peter Camejo, has written on post-Civil War Reconstruction and has been a pioneer on socially responsible investing. The Nader/Camejo ticket offers voters something very different.

Attack them all you want, but years from now Nader and Camejo's effort will be remembered with Upton Sinclair's "End Poverty in California" campaign for governor of California and with the presidential efforts of Norman Thomas, Henry Wallace, Eugene

Debs, and Bob LaFollette. They will be remembered as men who fought to make this a better democracy.

A Letter to the Black Caucus from a Black Woman Living in South Central

By Donna J. Warren San Francisco Bay View, July 14, 2004

"We respect your right to run, Mr. Nader. Withdraw."

-- Elijah Cummings, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus of the United States House of Representatives

To Rep. Cummings and members of the Black Caucus,

You demanded independent candidates Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo withdraw from the presidential race in favor of NAFTA-approving, Iraq-invading, Afghanistan-bombing, Sudanese-pharmaceutical-plant-bombing, right-wing-Israeli-prime-minister-and-convicted-murderer-Ariel-Sharon-supporting, impeachment-of-George-W.-Bush-for-the-forced-removal-of-democratically-elected-President-Jean-Bertrand-Aristide-refusing, and mandatory-minimum-sentencing-supporting John Kerry.

Kerry's contempt for human rights, international law, arms control, and the United Nations is unforgivable.

"Anybody But Bush" was your cry when Nader and Camejo visited your offices in late June. But let's be honest -- when Bush delivered lie after lie after lie during his State of the Union addresses, it was the Democrats who stood and clapped. The Democrats made the monster George Bush!

You don't challenge the Democrats and Republicans in their abdication of our communities, but you challenge Nader and Camejo for fighting for our communities. During your meeting, you condemned Nader for choosing Camejo, who speaks Spanish fluently, because you fear Malcolm X's friend will take away your brown votes!

Peter Camejo changed the minds and hearts of Californians to oppose California's horrendous Three Strikes law during his campaign for governor. Three Strikes imprisons African Americans twelve to one for every white person for the same nonviolent crime.

What have you done for us?

Does it matter to you that your constituents are hurt by redlining, lead-based paint

poisoning, predatory lending, payday loan rackets, and dirty meat? It matters to Ralph Nader.

Does it matter to you that student Nader challenged Harvard University when they published the lie that Blacks are inferior to whites? It matters to me.

Does it matter to you that only Nader campaigned in Ward 8 of the District of Columbia, exposing that sixty-five thousand people live without a single supermarket, yet the District of Columbia has had Black mayors and a Black city council for the last thirty-five years? It matters to your constituents.

What are you afraid of? That Nader and Camejo may "mess up your little party" because they advocate for Black Americans and you don't.

"Anybody But Bush" is your mantra. But even if Bush self-destructs, how can you support John Kerry without demanding a mandate? Corporate interests pull the Democrats twenty-four hours a day. Without a mandate to pull John Kerry in a progressive direction, there's no way you can demand equity.

- Kerry promises to appoint anti-abortion judges while professing to protect a woman's right to choose.
- The Senate Democrats confirmed right-wing Supreme Court Judge Antonin Scalia ninety-eight to zero. Not one Democratic senator, including Gore, opposed Scalia.

The Democrats could have blocked right-wing Supreme Court Judge Clarence Thomas's confirmation -- they were in control of the Senate -- but eleven Democrats moved across the line to confirm Thomas fifty-two to forty-eight while Senate majority leader George Mitchell sat in his office twirling his thumbs.

You don't stop anything that hurts us!

- You could have filibustered the tax cut for the wealthy, but you didn't.
- You could have demanded gas-efficient car engines, but instead you sanctioned the SUV and gave the auto companies an eight-year holiday without requiring better gas efficiency.
- You could have opposed genetically engineering foods, the petroleum industry, and the WTO, but you didn't.
- You could have opposed the federal crime bill which imprisons drug addicts for the drugs our government allowed to flow into the inner cities, but you didn't.
- You could have opposed the "leave-no-child-behind-high-stake-multiple-testing fraud," but instead you chose to sacrifice our children.
- You could have said "no" to the Patriot Act, but you didn't. You don't represent me!

In 2000, Congressman Julian Dixon sold me out like a \$2 whore when, as ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, he announced the CIA was not complicit in the destruction of the inner cities by crack cocaine. I'm tired of being sold out like a \$2 whore by Black people living the good life as my representative in our nation's capital.

Thomas Paine said in the 1700s: "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my

child may have peace." Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo are voices taking on the trouble of our day so that we and future generations may have peace.

Get off your knees and demand the Democrats stop sabotaging the Nader-Camejo Campaign. Demand Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo be included in the debates. Don't go down like a punk. Remember the ancestors and stand tall!

Sincerely,

Donna J. Warren, a constituent

From "Maverick" to Attack Dog: Howard Dean's Gay Bashing of Ralph Nader

By Sherry Wolf

Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>

July 10, 2004

Howard Dean gay bashed Ralph Nader on live radio before millions of listeners on NPR and no one chimed in to stop him. How could the Vermont also-ran, shilling for the anti-gay marriage John Kerry, slander the only presidential candidate who is for gay marriage by claiming over and over that Nader had accepted support from anti-gay Republicans?

Nader has not only come out for same-sex marriage -- a basic civil right -- but he is for ending legal discrimination against gays and lesbians that allows employers to fire someone for their sexual orientation in thirty-six states. Kerry and Dean oppose same-sex marriage, and both have repeatedly argued to leave it to the states to decide -- reminiscent of the Dixiecrats of old who argued to leave desegregation to the enlightened minds of the Mississippi and Alabama legislators. As a result, segregation remained the de facto law of the land for a century after the Civil War.

Though Dean is often trumpeted as a great advocate of gay and lesbian rights because Vermont was the first state to offer civil unions while he was governor, the reality behind that partial victory exposes Dean's own opportunistic nod to the homophobes. When the Vermont Supreme Court unanimously ruled that gay couples were due the same legal rights of marriage as heterosexuals and ordered the legislature to pass a law to that effect in 1999, Dean made it clear that he would not sign gay marriage into law and pushed instead for civil unions.

Civil unions do not carry with them any of the 1,049 federal rights and benefits of marriage. When Dean did sign civil unions into law, he did so "in the closet," without the usual cameras flashing and notables in attendance. At the time of signing, according to the Chicago Sun-Times, Dean "was going around the state telling folks he was only doing it because the Vermont Supreme Court made him."

Kerry voted against Clinton's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996 -- though 118 Democrats voted for it -- but since then he has come out strongly against same-sex marriage and has repeatedly condemned the Massachusetts legislature for granting

marriages to gay and lesbian couples.

Though the Democrats theoretically support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that would eliminate the right of employers to fire someone for their sexual orientation, they have allowed it to languish on paper for a decade without ever hitting the floor of Congress. According to the Washington Post, Bill Clinton held a closed-door meeting in 1997 with advocates of ENDA -- which has been chiseled away at to include notable exemptions for small businesses, the armed forces, and religious organizations. Clinton's "support" for gay civil rights was so half-hearted that he refused to use his influence to even get a vote on ENDA onto the House floor.

The Dean-Nader debate was aired on the very day when Republicans in the Senate were pushing to write discrimination against gays and lesbians into the Constitution via the Federal Marriage Amendment.

While Dean worked himself into a lather trying to slam Nader and prove his party's credentials as fighters for equal rights, neither Senators Kerry nor Edwards made an issue of this first attempt since slavery to include a denial of rights in the Constitution.

Those concerned with gay issues should remember the lessons from the Clinton years when deciding whom to vote for in November. Clinton's own Presidential AIDS Panel criticized his administration for failing to show a "coherent plan of action" against AIDS in 1998, despite the abundance of evidence indicating the effectiveness of preventive efforts, including needle exchanges. Though Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy led to witch-hunts of gays in the military, gay press such as The Advocate, Lambda Legal Defense, and most AIDS activists in ACT-UP insisted that gay rights supporters vote for a second Clinton term in 1996 and not mobilize protests that might embarrass Clinton.

The only real substance to Howard Dean's charges against Nader was in his attack on the endorsement Nader has received from the right-wing Reform Party. And while I find this party of Neanderthal blowhards to be repugnant in its anti-immigrant and homophobic views -- they are not the views of Ralph Nader!

Nader's clumsy handling so far of the Reform Party's endorsement should be challenged by his supporters, but taking heat from the likes of Democrats who have helped shape anti-gay policies such as "don't ask, don't tell" and DOMA is simply nauseating.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, protests against gay bashing and for AIDS drugs and gay rights exploded onto the streets of dozens of cities in response to the reactionary policies of the Reagan and Bush I administrations. These protests gave confidence to millions of gays and forced a bigoted Bush administration to fund AIDS research and back down from the verbal belligerence toward gays that marked previous administrations.

Thousands of workplaces were pressured to provide domestic-partner benefits to lesbians and gays. Yet there has been almost no national mobilization for gay rights since the 1993 demonstration of hundreds of thousands in Washington, D.C., where the incoming Democratic administration was praised for its promise to improve the

lives of lesbians and gays.

But the Democrats have reneged on those promises. According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, more than fifty lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people have been reported killed in attacks since Matthew Shepard's murder, though the actual number of deaths is likely higher because many antigay attacks go unreported.

The strategy of electing Democrats to deliver civil rights for lesbians and gays has been a dismal failure.

Vote Kerry and Cobb: An Open letter to Progressives

From Medea Benjamin, Peter Coyote, John Eder, Daniel Ellsberg, et al. Published on <http://www.commondreams.org>, July 23, 2004

There is no greater political imperative this year than to retire the Bush regime, one of the most dangerous and extremist in U.S. history. As people dedicated to peace, economic justice, equality, sustainability, and constitutional freedoms, we are committed to defeating Bush.

The only candidate who can win instead of Bush in November is John Kerry. We want Kerry to replace Bush, because a Kerry administration would be less dangerous in many crucial areas, including militarism, civil liberties, civil rights, judicial appointments, reproductive rights, and environmental protection.

But while helping Kerry-Edwards defeat Bush-Cheney, we don't want to endorse Kerry positions that are an insult to various causes we support, including movements for global justice and peace that have burgeoned in recent years. Indeed, we want to communicate to Kerry and the world that we oppose many of his policies, including some that are barely distinguishable from Bush policies.

Accordingly, we encourage progressives to organize and vote strategically this year.

In "swing states," where few percentage points separate Bush and Kerry, we encourage activists to mobilize voters behind Kerry. (A frequently updated list of swing states is posted at <http://www.swing04.com>.)

In "safe states" (and Washington, D.C.), so overwhelmingly pro-Bush or pro-Kerry that we can be confident of who will win in November, we encourage activists to mobilize voters behind Green Party presidential candidate David Cobb.

In all states, we encourage activists to engage in election-year vigilance to ensure that all votes count, especially those of racial minorities -- and to advocate for instant runoff voting and other reforms so that voters in future elections can support the candidate they most believe in without risk of electing the candidate they most oppose.

David Cobb has earned our endorsement in safe states by deftly steering the Green Party toward a nuanced strategy dedicated to ousting Bush, while seeking to grow a grassroots party that stands unapologetically for peace, racial and social justice, economic democracy, civil liberties, and genuine ecology. The Green Party gives political voice to movements that challenge Bush's Iraq policy and resist trade arrangements that trample on workers' rights, human rights, and the environment.

Despite a Democratic Party base that is increasingly progressive, anti-NAFTA/WTO and antiwar, John Kerry has lost the strong, brave voice he had as a young man who challenged the Vietnam War and now offers a faint echo of too many Bush policies -- from Iraq and military spending to the global trade regime and corporate coddling (e.g., Kerry's plan to reduce corporate taxes).

We are disappointed that, four years after the Florida disaster, Kerry and leading Democrats (with exceptions such as Dennis Kucinich, Jesse Jackson Jr., and Howard Dean) do not promote common-sense electoral reforms like instant runoff voting that would once and for all eliminate the "spoiler" risk that deforms U.S. elections.

With our electoral system yet to be fixed, we are left this year with the improvised solution of endorsing one candidate in some states and another candidate in other states. This dual-endorsement solution is preferable to endorsing either a candidate with important positions we oppose or a solidly progressive candidate whose votes in swing states could help Bush get four more years.

In this crucial election year, we encourage progressives to work tirelessly to vote Bush out -- as we build grassroots networks and coalitions to hold the Kerry administration accountable to the progressive values and policies shared by most Americans.

Signed:

Medea Benjamin, Peter Coyote, John Eder, Daniel Ellsberg, Angela Gilliam, Kevin Gray, Tom Hayden, Elizabeth Horton Sheff, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Robert McChesney, Norman Solomon.

Money vs. People: The Mystery of the 2004 Elections

By Peter Miguel Camejo

Published on <http://www.greensfornader.net>.

July 29, 2004

There is a mystery to the 2004 presidential election; a silence has fallen on America regarding a glaring contradiction. As we enter the second half of 2004, there is massive popular opposition to the war in Iraq and to the USA PATRIOT Act -- possibly a majority of Americans. Yet these same people are about to vote in overwhelming numbers for John Kerry for President.

But John Kerry and his running mate, John Edwards, gave President Bush eighteen standing ovations in January, voted for the war, say the war was right, insist on

continuing the occupation of Iraq against its peoples' desires, want to increase the number of troops and nations occupying Iraq, voted for "unconditional support to Bush" for his conduct of the war, and backed Bush by voting against the U.S. Constitution for the Patriot Act.

The only explanation for tens of millions voting against their heartfelt opinions is the lack of free elections in America. There are no runoff elections. Without runoffs people are trapped. They fear expressing their true opinions. If they vote for what they are for, they are told, they will only elect Bush. They must learn to vote against themselves, to accept the con game of a two-party system. People are taught not to vote for what they believe but against an individual.

An unpopular policy once identified with an individual can be continued by replacing the individual, keeping the policy with modifications. In replacing Bush, Kerry pledges to more effectively forward the same policy of imperial domination.

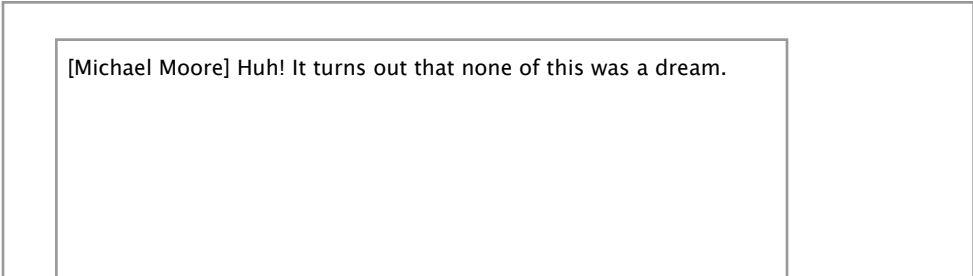
If runoff elections existed tens of millions would vote against both Bush and Kerry and for peace. Once the myth of invulnerability of the two-party system is broken the dam against democracy and free elections will break. Already 25 percent of Americans are no longer registered Democratic or Republican; they seek alternatives.

The Democrats' fear of Ralph Nader is rooted in the programmatic conflict between their Party's stance and their supporters. This is the real story of the 2004 elections.

This mystery is never written about in the media -- it is America's dark secret.

The 2000 presidential election was stolen when some sixty thousand people, primarily African Americans, had their right to vote illegally revoked in Florida. The film, Fahrenheit 9/11, opens showing one African-American congressperson after another asking for an investigation. But their cry for justice was squashed because not one Senator, not one Democrat, not Paul Wellstone, Barbara Boxer, Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, or John Edwards would defend democracy, and stand up for free elections.

Three and a half years later the Democratic Party has not lifted a finger to establish free elections in America. Not in a single state have they called for runoffs so Florida could never happen again. They could not make it clearer: the Democratic Party prefers that Republicans win elections, even without majority support, rather than allow free elections where a third party or an independent candidate could attract tens of millions from their base. Their answer is simple: Ralph Nader must not run, must not be an alternative.



[Michael Moore] Huh! It turns out that none of this was a dream.



On the day the joint session of both the House of Representatives and the Senate was to certify the election results ...
Al Gore, in his dual role as outgoing vice president, and president of the Senate, presided over the event that would officially anoint George W. Bush as the new president.



If any congressman wanted to raise an objection, the rules insisted that he or she had to have the signed support of just one senator.



[Congressman Alcee L. Hastings] Mr. President -- and I take great pride in calling you that -- I must object because of the overwhelming evidence of misconduct, deliberate fraud and an attempt to suppress voter ...

[Al Gore, The Traitor] The chair must remind members that under Section 18 of Title 3, United States Code, no debate is allowed in the joint session.

[Congressman Alcee L. Hastings] Thank you, Mr. President. To

answer your question, Mr. President, the objection is in writing, signed by a number of members of the House of Representatives, but not by a member of the Senate.



[Congresswoman Corinne Brown] Mr. President, it is in writing and signed by several House colleagues on behalf, and myself, of the 27,000 voters of Duval County in which 16,000 of them are African-Americans that was disenfranchised in this last election.

[Al Gore, The Traitor] Is the objection signed by a member of the Senate?

[Congresswoman Corinne Brown] Not signed by a member of the Senate. The Senate is missing.



[Congresswoman Barbara Lee] Mr. President, it is in writing and signed by myself on behalf of many of the diverse constituents in our country, especially those in the 9th Congressional District, and all American voters who recognize that the Supreme Court, not the people of the United States, decided this election.

[Al Gore, The Traitor] Is the objection signed by a senator?

[Congresswoman Barbara Lee] Unfortunately, Mr. President, it is not signed by one single senator.



[Congresswoman] Unfortunately, I have no authority over the United States Senate, and no senator has signed.



[Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek] Mr. President, it is in writing and signed by myself and several of my constituents from Florida. A senator is needed, but missing.

[Al Gore, The Traitor] Is the objection in writing and signed by a member of the House and a senator?



[Congresswoman Maxine Waters] The objection is in writing, and I don't care that it is not signed by a member of the Senate.



[Al Gore, The Traitor] The chair will advise that the rules do care, and the signature of a senator ...



[Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson]

[Michael Moore] Not a single senator came to the aid of the African-Americans in Congress. One after another, they were told to sit down and shut up.



[Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney]



[Congresswoman Eva M. Clayton]



[Congressman Earl Hilliard] And it's a sad day in America, Mr. President, when we can't find a senator to sign the objections.

[Al Gore, The Traitor] The gentleman will suspend.

[Congressman Earl Hilliard] I object.

[Al Gore, The Traitor] The gentleman will suspend.

-- Fahrenheit 9/11, written, directed and produced by Michael Moore

If free elections were held with a runoff system like in most civilized nations, if proportional representation existed where if a point of view receives 20 percent of the vote its supporters would receive 20 percent representation, then every vote would count, and the Democratic Party as we know it today would no longer exist. The one hundred million people who never vote would have a reason to vote. New parties would appear and a representative democracy would begin to blossom in America.

Ralph Nader has created a small hole in the dam. The danger is real. The Democrats are on an all-out effort to attack the Nader/Camejo campaign because if voters begin to vote for what they want the entire electoral system would begin to unravel. If twenty million citizens voted for Nader it would be the beginning of the end of the two-party system. The Democrats would enter into a crisis, the ability of money to control people would begin to crack and the possibility of a democracy where citizens could vote for what they believe would be born. The Democrats are determined, not to beat Bush but to stop Nader, to protect the two-party, pro-corporate rule that America lives under.

That is what is behind all the talk of the miniscule funding by Republican citizens of Nader/Camejo. It is part of a relentless attack against free elections and the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights.

This is why the Democrats have organized a nationwide "hate Nader" campaign. They seek to obfuscate the issues. They seek to prevent the right of citizens to vote for Nader by preventing Nader even his right to be on the ballot. State by state thousands of citizens sign petitions to place Nader on the ballot; state by state the Democrats harass, seek technicalities to challenge the signatures, and try to prevent allowing the people a choice that is pro-peace.

The attack on Nader by the San Francisco Chronicle with a banner front-page article claiming Republicans are funding Nader is just one part of an ongoing campaign. In spite of the relentless attacks against Nader the polls continue to show ten million people behind Nader/Camejo.

Wealthy Democrats and Republicans both cross-finance their campaigns. It is standard practice for corporations to donate to both. Republicans donate millions to the Democrats. The very corporations that Democrats supposedly oppose, Enron, Halliburton, and Exxon, for example, all give funds to Kerry/Edwards. Kerry/Edwards have no plans to return a penny of their Republican or corporate backing.

These corporate/lobbyist funds are not really contributions. They are investments or bribes with an expected return of access and policy, precisely like the Kerry/Edwards call for lower taxes on corporations. This kind of contribution dominates the financing of Bush and Kerry as well as most major party candidates for Congress and Senate.

Corporations once paid 33 percent of the taxes received by the federal government. Now they pay under 8 percent, yet Kerry/Edwards are promising to lower their taxes further in spite of the half-trillion-dollar federal deficit per year and the increasingly regressive taxes on working people.

Against this domination of money over people stand Ralph Nader and the Nader/Camejo campaign.

The Nader/Camejo campaign is seeking votes from all citizens, Democrats, Independents, Republicans, Greens, and Libertarians.

Just as we seek their votes we ask all of them to help fund our campaign that opposes the war in Iraq, the US Patriot Act, and defends the health and well-being of our working people.

We especially ask for donations for the right to be on the ballot and for free elections in the United States, elections that respect the will of the voters, that favor runoffs (instant runoff voting) and proportional representation.

Most working people never give funds to any candidate. Those who do occasionally give to a candidate have no anticipation of personal financial gain. It is that kind of donor that represents the overwhelming majority of contributions to Nader/Camejo. The bulk of our contributions are in amounts below 100 dollars per person.

The Nader/Camejo campaign does not accept funds from Exxon, Enron, or Halliburton as Kerry/Edwards do. We do not accept funding from corporations!

We ask that Kerry/Edwards stop their hypocritical campaign about the miniscule funding we have received from citizens registered Republican. We ask that they stop their campaign against the American voters seeking to deny them a choice at the ballot box by allowing ballot access and an opportunity for voters who support Nader/Camejo to vote for them.

We, like all other candidates, do not, can not, and will not give donors lie detectors to ascertain their objectives in funding our campaign.

We have proposed a simple solution to the funding issue. Establish public funding of all campaigns to create fairness and end corruption. Kerry/Edwards and Bush/Cheney oppose public funding.

The choice is clear. Continue a corrupt electoral system that closes choices, forces citizens to vote against their conscience, and allows money to control people -- or open up the electoral system, defend civil liberties, and establish free elections.

What You Won't Hear: Twelve Topics Democrats Will Duck at Convention

By Ralph Nader

Boston Globe

July 25, 2004

The Democratic National Convention that gathers in Boston this week to nominate John F. Kerry for president will be more like a coronation than a competition. Huzzahs, speeches, bands, balloons. These affairs have long lost any suspense or spontaneity,

but somewhere amid the endless corporate schmoozing and lobbyist gladhanding, you'd expect an ounce of inspiration.

Instead, voters will watch (or, rather, not watch) as more than \$13 million of their tax dollars (the amount allotted by the federal government for each convention) is spent on saying very little of substance.

Rather than ideas, this convention is about power and avoidance: the power of big business and special interests and the avoidance of any issues that might draw a clear distinction between our two leading political parties.

Here is a short list of what you won't hear this week, either on the convention floor or in the party's platform. Call them the twelve taboos.

1. You won't hear a call for a national crackdown on the corporate crime, fraud, and abuse that, in just the last four years, have robbed trillions of dollars from workers, investors, pension holders, taxpayers, and consumers. Among the reforms that won't be suggested are resources to prosecute executive crooks and laws to democratize corporate governance so shareholders have real power. Democrats will not shout for a payback of ill-gotten gains, to rein in executive pay, or to demand corporate sunshine laws. The convention will not demand that workers receive a living wage instead of a minimum wage. There will be no backing for a repeal of the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which has blocked more than 40 million workers from forming or joining trade unions to improve wages and benefits above Wal-Mart or McDonald's levels. One out of four U.S. workers is now being paid less than \$8.75 per hour.

2. John Kerry claims that he will call for a review of all existing trade agreements, but he will not call for a withdrawal from the WTO and NAFTA. Trade agreements should stick to trade while labor, environmental, and consumer rights are advanced by separate treaties without being subordinated to the dictates of international commerce.

3. Kerry may suggest that President Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy be rolled back, but he will steer clear of any suggestion that our income-tax system be substantially revamped. Workers should keep more of their wages while we tax the things we like least at the source, such as polluters, stock speculation, addictive industries, and energy-guzzling technologies. Corporations should be required to pay their fair share; corporate tax contributions as a percentage of the overall federal revenue stream have been declining for fifty years and now stand at 7.4 percent despite massive record profits.

4. There will be no call for a single-payer health system. Fifty-five years after President Truman first proposed it, we still need health insurance for everyone, a program with quality and cost controls and an emphasis on prevention. Full Medicare for everyone will save thousands of lives while maintaining patient choice of doctors and hospitals within a competitive private health-care delivery system.

5. There is no reason to believe that the Democrats will stand up to the commercial interests profiting from our current energy situation. We need a major environmental

health agenda that challenges these entrenched interests with new initiatives in solar energy, efficiency in motor vehicles, and other sustainable and clean energy technologies. Nor will there be any recognition that current fossil fuels are producing global warming, cancer, respiratory diseases, and geopolitical entanglements. Finally, there will be no calls for ending environmental racism that leads to contaminated water and air in our cities, to toxic dumps in poorer neighborhoods, and to high toxicities in the workplace.

6. Democrats will not demand a reduction in the military budget that devours half the federal government's operating expenditures at a time when there is no Soviet Union or other major state enemy in the world. Studies by the General Accounting Office and internal Pentagon assessments support the judgment of many retired admirals and generals that a wasteful defense weakens our country and distorts priorities at home.

7. You won't hear a clarion call for electoral reform. Both parties have shamelessly engaged in gerrymandering, a process that guarantees re-election of their candidates at the expense of frustrated voters. Nor will there be any suggestion that law-abiding ex-felons be allowed to vote. Other electoral reforms should include reducing barriers to candidates, same-day registration, a voter-verified paper record for electronic voting, runoff voting to insure winners receive a majority vote, binding none-of-the-above choices, and most important, full public financing to guarantee clean elections.

8. You will hear John Kerry speak about his "tough-on-crime" background as a federal prosecutor, but you will hear no calls for reform of the criminal justice system. Our nation now holds one out of four of the world's prisoners, half of them nonviolent. While they attempt to counter Republican charges that they favor criminals over victims, Democrats will say nothing about a failed war on drugs that costs nearly \$50 billion annually. And they will not argue that addicts should be treated rather than imprisoned. Nor should observers hope for any call to repeal the "three strikes and you're out" laws that have filled our jails or to end mandatory sentencing that hamstring our judges.

9. Democrats will ignore the Israeli peace movement whose members have developed accords for a two-state solution with their Palestinian and American counterparts. It is time to replace the Washington puppet show with a Washington peace show for the security of the American, Palestinian, and Israeli people.

10. The Democrats will not call for the United States to begin a military and corporate withdrawal from Iraq. Such a withdrawal would result in mainstream Iraqis no longer supporting or joining the insurgency. Troops from neutral, Arab, and other Muslim countries would temporarily replace U.S. forces as Iraqis get back their country through internationally supervised elections allowing for appropriate autonomy for the Kurdish, Sunni, and Shi'ite communities.

11. Seriously waging peace will be far cheaper than a permanent war economy which is generating huge deficits and distracting attention, talent, and resources from the American people.

12. Democrats will not stand up to business interests that have backed changes that

close the courtroom to wrongfully injured and cheated individuals, but not to corporations. Where is the campaign against fraud and injury upon innocent patients, consumers, and workers? We should make it easier for consumers to band together and defend themselves against harmful practices in the marketplace.

To the voters I say: Don't hold your breath waiting for the Democrats to put people, not corporations, first. Watch as this convention abides by the twelve taboos.

David Cobb's Soft Charade: The Greens and the Politics of Mendacity

By Joshua Frank

Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>

August 6, 2004

(The following is an expansion of a previous article. After receiving numerous e-mails from Campus Greens organizers, former Green co-chair Ben Manski, and many other irate Greens, I felt a need to clarify the misconceptions that are revolving around David Cobb's mundane campaign. And just to clarify, I've been registered Green since 1999, and worked on a number of ballot measures and campaigns.)

Green Party presidential candidate David Cobb has publicly said he is not running a "safe-state" campaign. In a rare interview with Steve Curwood of National Public Radio on July 2, when asked if he was running a "safe-state" strategy, Cobb replied, "No, it's not true. What I've said is I'm going to get on every ballot that I can possibly get on."

Sounds convincing. The guy is not only running in safe states, he wants to be on the ballot in as many states as possible. Fair enough. But is Cobb simply fabricating his own campaign's motives?

Indeed.

The fact is Cobb may not call what he plans to do a "safestate" approach, but it is. As his Web site contends: "[Cobb] has said he will focus his campaign on states neglected by the corporate parties (i.e., 'safe-states'), he has also said that he will visit and campaign in any state that invites him."

Invites him? I wasn't aware presidential candidates had to be invited to a state in order to campaign.

His Web site declaration continues: "For example, he has pledged to visit the battleground states like Ohio and Pennsylvania to support their petition drives to put the Green Party candidate on the state ballots."

So Cobb has publicly announced that he will not actively campaign in swing states even if he is on the ballot, although he will work in those states for other Green hopefuls.

"[In swing] states, I'm acknowledging that there is a profound responsibility on the citizens," Cobb told Curwood in the NPR interview, "and they should weigh their

options and decide how to spend their very precious vote."

Could you imagine John Kerry or George Bush muttering such feeble words: "Weigh their options?" I am no weathered campaign advisor, but I can imagine that it is a bad idea for any candidate to advise potential voters that they have a viable alternative to your own party's ticket. Shouldn't Cobb be trumping his campaign instead of asking voters to "decide how to spend their very precious vote"? Again, instead of fighting for the Green Party, he has oh-so-slyly admitted he sees quite a difference between Bush and Kerry. On what grounds he hasn't made clear.

As for Cobb's running mate Pat LaMarche, she is also a bit confused. Following Cobb's announcement that he wanted LaMarche to be his running mate, she said she would not commit to voting for herself and Cobb in November. "If Bush has got 11 percent of the vote in Maine come November 2, I can vote for whoever I want," she told the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram. "I love my country. Maybe we should ask them that, because if [Vice President] Dick Cheney loved his country, he wouldn't be voting for himself."

Later, perhaps realizing the stupidity of her remarks, LaMarche posted a press release on the Cobb campaign Web site. "I am honored to be the Green Party vice presidential candidate running with David Cobb," she lamented. "I want to reassure all members of the Green Party that, on November 2nd, I will be voting Cobb/LaMarche."

Glad we got that cleared up. It's too late, however. The cat is out of the bag. LaMarche, like Cobb, believes Kerry offers a stark alternative to George Bush's band of neocons. If some progressives feel that Kerry does, fine, but Greens shouldn't be the ones sparking that debate.

With all this it is clear that the Green Party may as well drop out of the presidential race. What's the point of running? If Cobb is attempting to build a party (as his defenders claim) grounded on the premise that Democrats offer a significant alternative to Republicans -- there is little need for a Green Party to even exist. Just join progressive Democrats who are attempting to change the centrist tides from within the establishment. That seems to be working pretty well. Just ask Dennis Kucinich.

Parties to Injustice: Democrats Will Do Anything to Keep Me Off the Ballot

By Ralph Nader

Washington Post

September 5, 2004

This summer, swarms of Democratic Party lawyers, propagandists, harassers, and assorted operatives have been conducting an unsavory war against my campaign's effort to secure a spot on the presidential ballots in various states. It is not enough that both major parties, in state after state, have used the legislatures to erect huge barriers, unique among Western democracies, to third-party and independent candidacies. Now they are engaging in what can only be called dirty tricks and frivolous

lawsuits to keep me and my running mate, Peter Miguel Camejo, off the ballot while draining precious dollars from our campaign chest.

This contemptuous drive is fueled with large amounts of unregulated money, much of it funneled through the National Progress Fund, an ostensibly independent group led by Toby Moffett, a former Democratic congressman who is currently a partner in a largely Republican lobbying firm called the Livingston Group. By contrast, to defend ourselves from the assault, we have to draw on funds that are limited and regulated by the Federal Election Commission.

News reports show that the National Progress Fund and other so-called independent 527 organizations (named for the section of the tax code under which they incorporate) were operating openly at the Democratic National Convention. They held meetings to discuss the best strategies and tactics to push the Nader/Camejo ticket off the ballot and they raised money from Democratic fat cats to accomplish their goals. It is evident that these "independent" groups are actually not independent but working closely with the Democratic Party.

In addition, chair of the Democratic Party of Maine, Dorothy Melanson, testified under oath in a public hearing before Maine's secretary of state last Monday that the national Democratic Party is funding efforts throughout the country to stop Nader/Camejo from appearing on ballots.

These ties with Democrats don't prevent the 527s from accepting help from entrenched corporate interests, or even Republican quarters, to finance challenges of the signatures we have collected to meet the requirements of ballot access. According to reports filed with the Internal Revenue Service, Robert Savoie, president of Louisiana-based Science & Engineering Associates, donated \$25,000 to the National Progress Fund in June. A month before, Savoie gave \$25,000 to the Republican National Committee.

In Pennsylvania, where a court last Monday barred us from appearing on the ballot, signature challenges have been mounted by Reed Smith, a law firm whose political action committee primarily gives to Republicans. A lawyer from the firm boasted to the New York Times that "8 to 10 lawyers in his firm were working pro bono on the case, 80 hours each a week for two weeks, and could end up working six more weeks." The firm is counsel to twenty-nine of the top thirty U.S. banks, twenty-six of the Fortune 50 companies, nine of the top ten pharmaceutical companies, and fifty of the world's leading drug and medical device manufacturers.

The melding of these interests demonstrates that it is the corporate-political duopoly that is working to limit voters' choices for this November. For all their talk about free markets, the major parties do not tolerate competition very well. They don't want voters to be able to consider a candidate who advocates health care for all; a crackdown on corporate crime, fraud, and abuse; a shrinking of the military-industrial complex and corporate welfare; a living wage for all full-time workers; and a responsible withdrawal from Iraq.

The zeal of these ballot access sentries comes from a refusal to respect the rights of

millions of voters to have the opportunity to vote for candidates of their choice. With their organized obstruction of our campaign's efforts just to get a place on the ballots, these authoritarians want to deny Americans more voices, choices, and agendas. The voters are the losers.

Watching their bullying maneuvers and harassing lawsuits around the country, I marvel at the absence of condemnation by Senator John F. Kerry or Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic National Committee chairman.

Senator Kerry told us that he would look into this situation seven weeks ago but we have not heard back from him yet. Around the same time, McAuliffe told me in a phone conversation that he actively approved of these organized efforts, one of which is ironically called the Ballot Project. He urged me to run only in the thirty-one states considered to be locked up by one of the two candidates.

Challenging the signatures of your rivals is an old political tactic, and when you're collecting hundreds of thousands of signatures, there are bound to be some that don't withstand scrutiny. But the Democrats are not just seeking compliance with harsh election laws. They are using dirty tricks to intimidate citizens.

That's the way it seemed to a fifty-eight-year-old supporter of ours in Oregon. On August 12, 2004, she was at home with her two grandchildren when she answered a knock on her door and found a man and woman who she said began threatening her with jail if there was any false information on the petitions she was collecting for our ballot access. These people, who called themselves "investigators," were dispatched by a law firm that has worked extensively with Oregon trade unions that have supported Democratic candidates. In many states our signature gatherers have been subjected to similar treatment in what is clearly an orchestrated campaign.

And some people who merely signed Nader/Camejo petitions have also been pressured. One person in Nevada got a call from someone who urged him to admit that he was tricked into signing our petition. When the petition signer said he had signed voluntarily, the caller continued to try to persuade him to claim that he had not signed the petition. After numerous requests, the caller identified himself and admitted he was from the Democratic National Committee in Las Vegas. A call to the number on the caller ID was answered, "Hello, DNC." We have similar reports from around the country.

Ballot access laws are so arbitrary and complex that they leave small parties open to legal pestering. In Arizona, large Democratic donors hired three corporate law firms to file frivolous challenges to our clearly ample number of signatures. For example, 1,349 signatures of registered voters were invalidated because the person who collected them had given his or her correct full address but had neglected to include the correct name of the county. The purpose of these exercises are, in lobbyist Moffett's words, "to neutralize [Nader's] campaign by forcing him to spend money and resources defending these things."

A covey of Democratic operatives in Illinois convinced the election board to disqualify signatures because the registered voters had moved since registering to vote even though they still lived in Illinois. The Democratic Speaker of the state House of

Representatives sent state employees, contractors, and interns to review and challenge our ballot access petitions. The speaker wouldn't say -- when asked either by reporters or in a Freedom of Information Act request my campaign filed in July -- whether these state employees took leave from their taxpayer-paid jobs.

In other states, Democratic operatives are using a grace period after the filing date and directly calling voters who signed, pressing them to withdraw their signatures or say that they were misled so that the Democrats could allege fraud later in court.

The Democratic Party's machine is operating in many other ways, too. Its apparatchiks were waiting at the Virginia secretary of state's office on August 20 to say that our signature gatherers did not arrive in time, when in fact they arrived with twenty-five minutes to spare. The head of the state Elections Division, who happens to be the former executive director of the Virginia Democratic Party, refused even to accept our petitions until she was ordered to do so by the state attorney general.

To excuse and distract from this accumulation of organized misdeeds, the Democrats are feeding the press the Big Lie that the Republicans are bankrolling and supporting us. If the Republicans were to spend one-quarter as much to support us as the Democrats are spending to obstruct our access to ballots and our supporters' civil liberties, we would be on all fifty state ballots by now.

We have not been accepting signatures obtained through organized Republican Party efforts in the three or four states where we have learned of such activity.

We are trying, of course, to win over some Republican and independent voters who voted for George Bush in 2000 but are furious with him over endless deficits, federal regulation of local education, corporate subsidies and handouts, the sovereignty-shredding World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement, the big-government-snooping Patriot Act and, lately, the Iraq quagmire.

In 2000 about 25 percent of our vote came from people who told exit pollsters they otherwise would have voted for Bush. Yet the most recent independent review of our current campaign found that only 4 percent of our donations came from people who have also given to the Republican Party. The Center for Responsive Politics found that this group of fifty-one people gave \$406,000 to the Republicans and \$53,000 to Nader/Camejo. Amusingly, however, the center found that our Republican backers gave even more, \$63,000, to the Democrats.

When I talked to Kerry, I cautioned him that if he did not order a stop to the dirty tricks of his Democratic underlings and allies, he may face a mini-Watergate type of scandal. For Democrats and Republicans who care about civil liberties, free speech, and an equal right to run for elective office, this festering situation should invite their very focused demands to cease and desist.

Hand it to the Democrats to keep some costs down, though. A contractor they hired in Michigan to make phone calls to check the validity of our tens of thousands of signatures outsourced the work to India.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 9:18 pm**

Part 2 of 2

Only Progressive Unity Can Defeat Bush

By Zack Kaldveer, Media Coordinator, Greens for Kerry, and Sophie Mintier, Treasurer, Greens for Kerry

October 21, 2004

We consider this election to be the most important in a generation. The Bush/Cheney administration is the most extreme, incompetent, and dangerous in our nation's history. The prospects of a second term and the consequences it would have on our country and world led us to a simple question: "How do Greens and progressives participate in what was clearly becoming the most important challenge in a generation: ending the reign of George W. Bush?" The answer to that question is to vote for John Kerry in swing states.

We joined the Green Party because of its commitment to human rights, sustainability, economic and environmental justice, peace, and civil liberties. Indeed, if these are more than slogans, and truly represent our core principles, then uniting to defeat Bush was a moral imperative. For that reason, we formed Greens for Kerry (GFK), and our mission was simple: help beat Bush, mobilize to push Kerry to adopt a more progressive agenda if elected, and promote the growth of the Green Party on a grassroots level.

Like so many progressives, we are wholly unsatisfied with our current, money-driven, corporate-dominated political system and the limited options that a two-party democracy provides. But, given our current political reality, we believe it is our civic duty to help unseat George W. Bush, the mandatory first step if a larger progressive movement is to ever take shape. After November 2, if Kerry is elected, we must continue on with phase two of the long-term goal that most progressives share: building a political movement in America from the grassroots up. In less than four years this administration has weakened milestone environmental protection laws like the Clean Air Act (four hundred environmental rollback attempts); eliminated key labor rights fought for and won by those before us; dismantled what once were considered unassailable constitutional rights; appointed extremist judges to our country's federal courts; and established a new military doctrine of pre-emptive nuclear war.

As progressives we recognize that John Kerry is not an ideal choice. However, to deny the significant differences between the two candidates on issues ranging from environmental protection, nuclear proliferation, women's rights, the Supreme Court, and labor rights, is intellectually dishonest.

We ask that when you enter that voting booth you consider the worker making minimum wage who won't be receiving a \$1.85 an hour raise (\$3,848 more a year:

Kerry proposes a \$7.00 minimum wage) if Bush is re-elected; remember the single mother whose childcare services will be cut; remember the women whose reproductive rights will be jeopardized; remember the effect that Bush's policies will have on the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Then tell yourself it doesn't matter how you vote.

This election is not an academic exercise -- lives are at stake. But don't just take our word for it: Noam Chomsky recently remarked, "Anyone who says 'I don't care if Bush gets elected' is basically telling poor and working people in the country, 'I don't care if your lives are destroyed.'" He also quite rightly stated, "Then there is another choice: electing Bush or seeking to prevent his election."

Winona LaDuke, Nader's running mate in 2000, stated just this week, "I love this land, and I know that we need to make drastic changes in Washington if we are going to protect our land and our communities I'm voting my conscience on November 2; I'm voting for John Kerry."

In fact, seventy-five members of the Nader 2000 Citizens Committee recently signed a letter calling on swing-state voters to support Kerry, which included such progressive legends as Jim Hightower, Studs Terkel, Cornel West, and Howard Zinn. Are these individuals, who have dedicated their lives to strengthening our democracy and speaking truth to power all just sellouts? Or do they recognize something larger, something that we believe all of us feel on the deepest of levels -- that our democracy, freedom, future, and past are under assault, and it is our job to put an end to it.

ignorant: lacking knowledge or information as to a particular subject or fact: ignorant of quantum physics.
-- Ignorant, by Dictionary.com

Michael Moore is a perfect example. On national TV he called Ralph Nader crazy for daring to run. Moore went on to speak about "we," meaning the future Kerry government, as though there was any connection between what Moore has advocated in his writings and movies and what Kerry would do. This delusional effort which swept an entire current of well-known progressive leaders from Chomsky to Moore has really revealed the failure of that layer to understand the nature of our society and the role of our two-party system. Deep down it shows a lack of belief that the American people could ever rise up and change America.

-- Lessons From the 2004 Elections, by Peter Miguel Camejo

If you still aren't convinced, please consider using a key tool GFK and other progressive organizations are promoting this election year to both help defeat Bush and support third-party candidates like Ralph Nader and David Cobb called "vote pairing" (<http://www.votepair.org>). Vote pairing allows would-be Nader or Green Party voters in swing states to swap their votes with Kerry supporters in non-swing states. This allows you to vote your conscience, vote out Bush, and begin to turn our country around.

The world community, and the millions of Americans whose lives will be hurt by four more years of this administration are pleading that we help put an end to this imperial regime. We need to heed their call. Voting for John Kerry in swing states is our only realistic response.

An Open Letter to Former Naderites Running Scared in 2004 [*]

By Ralph Nader Published at <http://www.votenader.org>, October 27, 2004

I was saddened to read your open letter urging people to vote for John Kerry in 2004. Saddened, not because of the impact on my vote but because it signals more of the same surrender of some liberal thinkers.

Senator Kerry made it clear in the three debates with President Bush that he has no intention of getting out of the illegal occupation of Iraq. He is going to fight the war to win it and will send more troops if needed. He also showed that rather than challenging the military-industrial complex he intends to expand the military by forty thousand more troops. How can any peace activist support a candidate who holds those views? Even without the voice of the peace movement, about half the American public wants the U.S. out of Iraq. If the peace movement had stood for ending the Iraq occupation and demanding that their candidate do so then we would have had a very different debate in 2004. Now, no matter how the election turns out, we are likely to see a bloody offensive after the war and a quagmire that will become a civil war with the U.S. on the side of our puppet government against the Iraqi people.

Regrettably, the same is true for other popular progressive issues. Two-thirds of the public supports health care for all now, yet Senator Kerry has put forward a plan that leaves 20 million without health care. The American public believes that full-time workers should make a wage that they and their families can live on. Yet John Kerry only advocates raising the minimum wage to \$7 an hour by 2007 -- this will keep wages at the equivalent of pre-1960 earnings -- at a time when some CEOs are now earning \$7,000 per hour. And, even on the environment, in the debates John Kerry made it clear he did not support the Kyoto Treaty -- despite the clear evidence of global climate change and its ruinous impact on the environment. The women's movement has been told that Kerry will consider anti-choice judges and that he is proud of his vote for Justice Scalia. African Americans have been ignored, taken for granted, and their issues not even discussed.

If the liberal leadership had not surrendered to the Anybody-But-Bush mentality and

demanded John Kerry support these issues they would have accomplished two important things. First, they would have made John Kerry a better candidate -- rather than allowed him to become an echo of George Bush's policies. Second, they would have advanced the progressive agenda, rather than allowed this popular agenda to be ignored in a presidential election year.

Those of you who were asked to sign this petition by Robert Brandon, a Democratic Party operative, should know that he misled you with his false statement, claiming that Nader-Camejo are supported by "right-wing campaign donors." The Center for Responsive Politics found that only 4 percent of Nader-Camejo donations came from Republican donors, many from classmates who I have worked with on various social justice issues. Indeed, the Center found that the Democratic candidate, John Kerry, has taken more than \$10 million from Republican donors -- one hundred times more than Nader-Camejo has received. You should not confuse the conclusion of the letter with its deceptive predicates. You should have done your homework.

Finally, what have you said about the anti-democratic dirty tricks, political bigotry, harassment, and intimidation by the Democratic Party and the Kerry-Edwards campaign? We would welcome hearing from you if you want to join us in condemning these gross violations of civil liberties and Nader-Camejo and the millions of voters who are denied the candidate of their choice.

I plan to continue to fight for justice -- there should be no holiday from that struggle no matter how this election turns out. We hope the scared liberal leaders who abandoned their principles in 2004 will find a way to find the courage of their convictions in the future and rejoin this effort.

Sincerely,

Ralph Nader

Note:

A number of these people never worked for any group under my supervision. They are a tiny minority of the thousands of people who have worked in the groups I have founded.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 9:20 pm**

PART 1 OF 2

CHAPTER FIVE

Lessons from the 2004 Elections Political Independence Is the Lesson of 2004 for Progressives

By Howie Hawkins
November 8, 2004

The 2004 election should jolt progressives into rejecting once and for all the self-defeating strategy of supporting the Democrats as the lesser evil. "Anybody But Bush" resulted in anything but the progressive agenda.

Progressives didn't lose on November 2. They lost long before November 2 when beating Bush became the central priority for most progressives. If Kerry had won, he would be sitting down right now with Bush during the transition period, two Skull and Bones brothers jointly planning escalation of the war in Iraq and the corresponding neglect of social and environmental crises. The only times prominent progressives got any widespread media coverage in this election was when they joined in the Democrats' \$20 million attack on the independent antiwar, anti-corporate Nader/Camejo ticket.

Working people lost the election last April when the labor movement continued to support Kerry even after he pointedly prioritized deficit reduction and a military spending hike over social spending. By June, when Kerry reassured the Democratic Leadership Council, the organized corporate force in the Democratic Party of which he is a founding member, that "I am not a redistributionist Democrat," unions should have been in open rebellion against Kerry.

Environmentalists lost the election as soon as the leadership of the big environmental groups decided to attack rather than support the Nader/Camejo ticket. Nader/Camejo was the one ticket with both the will and potential capacity to put before the nation the urgent need for a demilitarization and solarization of the economy before the impending peak of oil and gas production and the food, heating, electrical, and other material supply lines of petro-industrial society start breaking down.

The peace movement lost the election when it collapsed into the pro-war Kerry campaign, thereby giving legitimacy to the postelection escalation of the war to colonize Iraq that we are now witnessing. Because Kerry was as pro-war as Bush, it was clear long before the vote on November 2 that the U.S. government, under Kerry or Bush, would escalate the war for oil in Iraq and cut domestic spending to pay for it.

The 99 percent Bush/Kerry vote should not be taken as a 99 percent mandate for sacrificing social needs at home to empire abroad. It's more like a 70 percent mandate. The November 5 AP/Ipsos poll showed seven in ten Americans think U.S. troops should stay until Iraq is "stabilized." But that is up 32 percent from earlier in the year, when polls showed that only a 38 percent minority, in both the May 11 CBS/New York Times poll and the September 13 Harris poll, said U.S. troops should stay until Iraq is "stabilized." That's what happens when two pro-war candidates debate who can best fight the war to "stabilize" Iraq and the peace movement supports one of them. Peace movement support for the pro-war lesser evil helped turn a pro-war minority into a pro-war majority.

Progressives who supported Anybody But Bush have to face the fact that their lesser-evil strategy suffered a crushing defeat in this election. Not only did unions and other nominally progressive political organizations blow a few hundred million dollars failing

to elect Kerry; worse, progressives lost the battle of public opinion as the lesser-evil strategy took progressive demands completely out of the debate, thus enabling Kerry to join programmatically with Bush in a debate about which one of them could best promote a militaristic approach to Iraq, terrorism, the Patriot Act, and federal spending priorities.

Progressives made no demands on Kerry. They never threatened to take their votes to the progressive Nader/Camejo ticket. Progressives marginalized themselves by allowing Kerry to take their votes for granted.

The political lesson that progressives should draw from the 2004 election is that abandoning their demands to support the Democrats as the lesser evil is political suicide.

Progressives can best fight the right through their own party that can advance a real alternative to militarized corporate plunder without compromise because it is independent of the funding and influence of the corporate/military complex. So the next four years should be about:

- strengthening the Green Party as an alternative to the bipartisan consensus of the corporate-sponsored parties;
- recommitting the Greens to independent politics;
- building independent movements for peace, justice, and the environment that are oriented toward winning people over to their demands instead of merely delivering them to the Democratic Party; and
- giving those movements independent electoral expression, especially at the municipal level where the Greens can continue to win offices, begin transformation from below by exercising the considerable autonomous powers of municipalities, and demonstrate that there really is an alternative.

New Mexico: A Sobering Lesson for Practical Fusion

By Jack Uhrich

Green Horizon Quarterly

Fall 2004

The New Mexico Green Party made national headlines in 1994. Its candidates for governor and lieutenant governor, Roberto Mondragon and Steve Schmidt, received over 10 percent of the vote, and the favored Democrats in the race, Bruce King and Patsy Madrid, lost.

All of a sudden, seemingly coming from nowhere, the Greens were a power to be reckoned with in New Mexico politics. Over the next six years, they would become what David Cobb called a "flagship" state party of the national Green movement, looked to as a model by Green parties all over the country.

Actually, like all "overnight successes," there was a lot of unseen groundwork laid beforehand. The NM Green Party's first chairperson, Abe Gutmann, had gained 40

percent of the vote in a state legislative race in 1992, Andres Vargas received 42 percent the same year in a race for district attorney, and Steve Schmidt had helped lay the groundwork for all the Green electoral successes that were to come over the next several years with his proposed strategy of running "serious, credible, platform-based candidates and campaigns."

But today, after all that groundwork and success, the New Mexico Green Party is a shell of its former self. Its Web site doesn't appear to have been updated in almost two years. They've only elected two candidates in the last three years, and one of their elected officials, Santa Fe city council member Miguel Chavez, switched his registration from Green to Democrat in 2002. Further, the Greens' candidate for governor in 2002, who helped the party regain its ballot status, has also switched his registration to Democrat to help the Dennis Kucinich campaign, and many others in the Albuquerque area have done the same.

What Happened? What Lessons Can Be Learned?

What happened to the momentum of the New Mexico Greens? Is their fate indicative of larger issues within the Green Party nationally? Does their fate foretell problems to come in other states? What lessons can we learn from their successes and shortcomings?

Even though many independent and Democratic progressives (incorrectly) blamed the Greens for the Democrats' loss in 1994, there were also many progressives -- both inside and outside of the Democratic Party -- who were glad to see an alternative out there. In late 1995, this writer helped to pull together Green Party leaders and leaders of NM's Pro PAC (a political action committee for progressive Democrats). An informal compromise was worked out, whereby the Greens agreed not to run candidates against incumbent Democrats that we considered progressive and supportive of our platform. Essentially, New Mexico Greens were practicing what Abe Gutmann called "practical fusion," whereby, even though they didn't formally endorse some of the non-Green progressive candidates, Greens were tacitly supporting them by not running someone against them and splitting the progressive vote. And that type of principled, positive cooperation was reciprocated by progressive Democrats. Green Santa Fe city council member Cris Moore was endorsed by a key local union in his successful bid to become the first elected Green in New Mexico, Abe Gutmann was endorsed by Pro-PAC and the Sierra Club, this writer by the National Association of Social Workers, and other Greens were endorsed by key people-of-color, feminist, gay, and lesbian leaders who were active progressive Democrats. So Greens were seen as exercising their "Green clout" both ways, by helping progressive Democrats, as well as punishing conservative ones.

Change of Direction in 1996-97

Unfortunately, a number of events in late 1996 and early 1997 changed the direction of the Green Party and its strategy. First, the New Mexico Democratic leadership undercut the efforts of progressives in their own party, and blocked the Greens' attempts to run Democratic progressives like state legislator Max Coli and Carol Miller (who was still a Democratic candidate at that time) as fusion candidates on the Green Party ballot line. And in June 1997, the New Party lost its case for fusion before the U.S.

Supreme Court, by a daunting 6–3 vote. Have a look at Micah Sifrey's Spoiling for a Fight: Third Party Politics in America (2002).

Just before the Supreme Court decision, in the spring of 1997, the New Mexico Green Party again made national headlines, when Carol Miller (now a Green), got 17 percent of the vote in a threeway special election for U.S. Congress. This time there was no denying the "spoiler" impact of a Green in the race. Conservative Republican Bill Redmond defeated Democrat Eric Serna by just 3 percent. Carol's 17 percent of the vote was a clear factor in Serna's defeat.

Following the exercising of the spoiler part of the party's "Green clout" in the 1997 race, even more progressive and moderate Democrats made overtures to move toward fusion, whether practical or legal. According to John Nichols, in the August 1997 issue of The Progressive magazine ("Spoiling for success: in New Mexico, the Green Party costs the Democrats a Congressional seat"), Bill Richardson, then the most prominent New Mexico Democrat, and a Latino, called for "early entreaties" to the Greens, and even talked about a Green–Democrat fusion ticket for Governor in 1998.

Also, in early 1998 Shirley Baca, a popular, progressive Chicana Democratic state legislator, approached the Greens about running as a fusion candidate for Congress in New Mexico's southern district, which had a reactionary Republican congressman. She was even willing to use her situation to put forth another test case on fusion to the New Mexico courts, which many Greens and legal experts believed they could have won.

At the same time, Greens continued to win on the local level. Fran Sena Gallegos was elected as a Santa Fe judge in March of 1996, Gary Claus was elected to the Silver City Council in May of 1997, and Cris Moore was re-elected to the Santa Fe City Council in March of 1998.

An Accumulation of High-Profile "Spoiler Races"

But the accumulation of high-profile "spoiler races" had begun to dampen the tenuous coalition the Greens had built with Roberto Mondragon and his progressive allies in the Chicano community. Roberto, a lifelong friend of Eric Serna's, who had worked together with him on the Rainbow Coalition, left the Greens and returned to Serna and the Democrats when the Greens endorsed Carol's run in 1997.

At this point the New Mexico Greens were at a crossroads. Legal fusion, at least as a national strategy, was dead. However, it was still legally possible in New Mexico, there was support for it among even some mainstream Democrats like Richardson, and, even without it, there were practical things that Greens and progressive Democrats had cooperated on up until then, and could continue to cooperate on. In other words, "practical fusion" was still possible, as both a state and a national strategy.

Carol Miller Chooses to Run for Congress Again: Party Is Split

However, at the Green Party's state convention in 1998, Carol Miller refused the urgings of a number of the elders in the party that she run for another, less volatile

office, like secretary of state, where many felt she had a real chance of winning. Instead, she chose to run again for Congress, this time against popular New Mexico attorney general Tom Udall. As attorney general, Udall had protected the Greens' ballot status with a special ruling that he had issued, and he was supportive of many parts of the Green Party platform.

At that same convention, the Greens voted formally not to continue to seek fusion, but to instead push for IRV as its major electoral reform. They did stay out of the governor's race, but they refused to support Shirley Baca for Congress, or moderate Republican Lorenzo Garcia in his race for treasurer (even though he had gained the Greens their highest vote total ever in a statewide race, 33 percent, running as a Green in 1994).

Besides Miller's race, 1998 also brought two more spoiler races where the Democrats lost. Green Bob Anderson gained more than 15 percent of the vote in a special congressional election in Albuquerque in the spring of 1998, and then more than 10 percent in the general election in the fall. In both races, Anderson's percentages prevented the Democrat from winning and helped elect conservative Heather Wilson, who is now a national force in Republican politics.

In the meantime, Carol Miller received less than 4 percent in her race against Tom Udall, avoiding another Democratic loss. However, her decision to run caused a major split among Greens over the practical fusion versus the more purist spoiler/instant runoff voting (IRV) strategy. Many Greens in Carol's district and around the state had openly expressed concern about the spoiler effect of her run in the Udall race, and Abe Gutmann even went so far as to organize a "Greens for Udall" campaign. He was ultimately censured by the party for taking financial support from Udall for this effort, but his censure led to an ongoing internal struggle that ultimately split the party in two, and that continues to this day.

Movement Groups Angered by the Spoiler Campaigns

Along with that, Miller's insistence on running against Udall, coupled with the outcome of the 1998 Congressional races in Albuquerque, angered many in organized labor, the people-of-color communities, and other former allies of the Greens in the gay and lesbian, environmentalist, and women's movements. Most people agreed that the Democratic candidate in Albuquerque was particularly weak, but they also felt that the Republican, Heather Wilson, was infinitely worse. Consequently, in 1999, a coalition of progressive people-of-color groups attacked the New Mexico Greens with a public campaign that reached the national media, accusing them of being racist and not caring about working-class people.

The Greens eventually met with and worked out an uneasy truce with these groups, but the die was cast. From then on, for all intents and purposes, active alliances between the Greens and people-of-color organizations -- as well as most of organized labor and other progressive groups -- were essentially over.

In 2000, there was yet another high-level spoiler race in the Albuquerque congressional race, coupled with the impact of Ralph Nader's national race. So, in a

period of six years, the Green Party of New Mexico found itself involved in six high-profile spoiler races, in addition to the Nader 2000 race. In each race, there were good reasons not to like the choices the Democrats offered. But in each case (except for the Udall race), the Republican who was elected in place of the Democratic candidate was measurably worse than the Democrat. And in the case of Udall's election, the state Green Party officially opposed him, and then punished the most prominent Green who supported him, alienating many of Udall's supporters, most of whom would have supported Greens in other races.

Democrats Shift Strategy: Wait Out the Greens, "No" To IRV

All of this set the stage for what has taken place since. Despite the Greens' continued arguments that IRV is ultimately in the Democrats' interest to support, the Democratic establishment appears to have chosen instead to wait out the Greens. They apparently believe that the Greens will eventually wear out their welcome with the people, who they think will ultimately decide that it's better to elect a bad Democrat -- than vote for a Green and see an even worse Republican elected.

And the Democrats' strategy seems to be working. At present there are only two elected Greens in office, down from a high of five in 2000.

New Mexico's experience with their own six spoiler races, combined with the impact of the 2000 presidential race, and the subsequent threat of a spoiling effect on other high-profile races, such as Paul Wellstone's U.S. Senate race in Minnesota in 2002, has left every state Green Party with a spoiler "albatross" that it must begin to address realistically. In order to implement practical reforms like instant runoff voting, Greens need to have at least a working relationship with Democrats, especially those closest to the beliefs and values of the Green Party platform. But the effects of continuous spoiler races, without an at least equal amount of counter-balancing cooperative efforts with the broader progressive community, have been to drive a wedge between the two camps.

A Different Green Strategy Is Needed

Obviously a different strategy is needed. I advocate that we return to the original New Mexico strategy of fusion, both legal fusion, where possible, and practical fusion where it isn't. That does not mean we should abandon the quest for IRV, or that we would never use the threat of spoiling a race. Practical fusion includes the threat of spoiler races, and the spoiler races in 1994 and 1997 obviously had some major positive outcomes toward building the party. Our initial judicious use of a combination of practical fusion and spoiling in the mid-1990s enabled us to come very close (one vote, in the last legislative committee) to getting IRV on the ballot as a constitutional amendment.

However, after 1997 the party became too rigid in its approach, too unwilling to accept certain political realities that they were not in a position to change at that time, and too lacking in collective knowledge about how to negotiate the Green clout they had built into practical accomplishments that they could continue to build on. Instead, the political purism of the New Mexico Greens of the late-1990s (and this author

embarrassingly includes himself as all too often a part of that purist camp), led to too few wins on the local level to counterbalance the effect of the high-profile spoiler races, and a growing unwillingness on the part of new candidates to step forward and run on the Green Party line. This left the public with the perception that the Greens may have admirable values and good ideas, but don't have the knowledge or the clout to make them reality.

What If!

Looking back, one cannot help but wonder, what if, after the 1997 race, Carol Miller had instead run for secretary of state and the Greens had instead supported Udall openly, as well as Shirley Baca in her southern New Mexico congressional race (a race she could also have run with our support)? Both Democrats were basically supportive of most of the Green Party platform. What if both of them had won, with open Green support? What if, instead of running in the second election in 1998, Bob Anderson had declared the first race as essentially the first outcome of an IRV-style selection process, with him being the candidate disqualified in the first round of voting, and thrown his support to the Democratic candidate in the second race? It's possible that New Mexico would now have possibly three Democratic congresspeople, instead of just one, and two of them more progressive than most Democrats in Congress.

Would not the Green Party in New Mexico also have looked different today? When progressives saw that the Green Party used their Green clout in more than just negative ways, the Green Party wouldn't have been yoked with the spoiler albatross. Green clout would be seen as a force that could help Democrats as well as hurt them. In turn, the New Mexico Green Party today would be enjoying increased support from labor, progressive organizations, people-of-color organizations, and progressive Democrats, all grateful for the critical support of the Greens -- support that had been the key to victory in these elections. Perhaps then, Green Abe Gutmann's 45 percent vote for city council in 1997, and Melissa McDonald's 46 percent in her 2000 race for county commissioner, would have instead been stretched to a winning 51 percent, and Greens would have representation in the governments of two of the most influential counties in the state. Perhaps Tom Udall and other progressive Democrats would have been so grateful for our support that they would have continued their qualified support for the party, and we would be growing in numbers, candidates, and newly elected Greens, instead of scratching our heads as to what went wrong.

Unfortunately, members of the Green Party can't rewrite New Mexico's history. They can only learn from it, apply it to their own times, develop new strategies, and try to do better in their future work. But the history lesson of New Mexico is that it's time for a change in strategy, if the Green Party is to grow and thrive.

As we go to press, there is some indication that the climate in New Mexico is starting to change. Popular Green leader Rick Lass has decided to drop out of his race for the New Mexico state legislature, so as not to split the vote with a progressive Democrat, who has a better chance of winning, and who supports much of the Green Party platform. Perhaps once again, the New Mexico Green Party will provide a model for Green parties all over the country to look up to.

The Greens Are Enduring, Debating, and Learning

By Steve Welzer

Green Horizon Quarterly

Spring 2005

The Green Party has now run national electoral campaigns under conditions of Democratic Party incumbency (2000) and Republican Party incumbency (2004). There were specific circumstances and issues in each case, of course, but to the extent that general conclusions can be drawn and lessons learned from these experiences the party will benefit and go forward.

Perhaps the most significant observation is that the Green Party, running an appealing candidate, has a chance to be perceived by many progressives as a serious and welcome alternative when a Democrat has been occupying the White House, but when the incumbent administration is Republican many of those same progressives will view the candidate of the Democratic Party as enough of an alternative as to merit support; moreover, they will tend to adopt a rhetoric of "closing ranks" and harangue against "spoiling," putting pressure on the Green Party to avoid running a high-impact campaign.

Handling "Anybody But... "

The "ABB" (Anybody-But-Bush) syndrome made 2004 a difficult year for the Greens, but it was certainly instructive. What the Greens will need to do is learn to anticipate it (in its generalized form -- "ABR" -- Anybody But the Republican). If the Green Party could become the repository of memory for the electoral wing of the social change movement, it could be ready each cycle to graphically remind progressives about the extent to which they are invariably disappointed with Democrats in power -- and about how the resurgence of alarmism when the Republicans are in serves no function other than to retard the development of a true alternative.

Another lesson of 2004 is that, internally, the Greens need to develop an organizational culture of steadfast independence. It was problematic that a significant number of Greens supported, worked for, contributed to, or voted for the candidate of the Democratic Party in 2004. Others reacted to the ABB pressure by opting for a low-impact, deferential presidential campaign. If they hope to overcome third-party marginalism, the Greens will need to project an image of gravitas while establishing in the minds of the voters a strong and clear-cut differentiation between themselves and both of the establishment parties.

Handling "Spoiler" Vilification

There is no way to know whether or not Al Gore would have won the 2000 election if the Ralph Nader/Green Party ticket had not attracted the highest percentage vote for a progressive third-party campaign since that of Robert LaFollette in 1924. It is conceivable that Nader did, in fact, "spoil" the election for Gore.

What's not in doubt is that the high-visibility impact of the 2000 campaign transformed and simultaneously provoked a crisis within the Green Party. On the one hand it was a step toward the party becoming viewed as a potentially serious new force in American politics and it catapulted the Greens to the front of the ranks among third-party initiatives. On the other hand, justified or not, it prominently associated the Green Party with spoiling. Nader's role in the election became fodder for the punditry; both he and the party found themselves confronted with a stinging campaign of vilification. (Seen on a Democratic Party discussion e-list: "GREEN=Get Republicans Elected Every November.")

The "spoiling" issue is a complex and difficult one that always has divided partisans of independent politics in this country, given our winner-take-all system -- and it surely will continue to do so until thoroughgoing electoral-system reform is achieved. Groups and even individuals are torn about this issue. In recent years the Labor Party and the New Party foundered when they were not able to successfully come to terms with it. So it was not surprising to see the Green Party internally divided as the 2004 electoral cycle approached.

Some Greens were concerned that if the party was perceived to "again" be a factor in the defeat of the Democratic Party opponent to George W. Bush, an indelible "bull in a china shop" stigma would impede its organizing efforts for years to come. When Ralph Nader made it clear that he would not accede to any type of campaign strategy which involved less than an all-out effort, Greens concerned about spoiling resisted the idea of another Nader/Green campaign.

Others, to the contrary, felt it was specifically important for the Greens to show that the party would not back down in the face of the "spoiler" vilification. They asserted it would be a mistake to give any credence to the idea that the Green Party's 2.7 percent of the vote in 2000 constituted "too much of an impact," and they felt that a rejection of Nader could give the impression that the party was less than steadfast in its determination to become a serious electoral force.

Questions and Differing Perceptions about the Party's Role

Discussions leading up to 2004, while often focused on the "Nader question" showed the extent to which Greens have questions and differing perceptions about the appropriate role of their party vis-à-vis the establishment parties. Should there be any degree of contingency to our opposition? Is our growth dependent upon weaning progressives gradually out of the orbit of the Democratic Party? To what extent and under what circumstances should we take pains to be "good citizens of the progressive movement" by deferring to the fact that the Democrat is the immediate practical alternative in an important race?

These questions deeply divided the party in a year when many progressives were viewing the 2004 election as a national plebiscite on the legitimacy, policies, and war of George W. Bush. The Cobb/LaMarche campaign made a point of exhibiting understanding and tolerance for voters who felt they had to prioritize defeating Bush. This posture succeeded in getting attention and praise from those prone to advocating an "inside/outside" strategy (a July letter from progressives with that orientation

toward the Democratic Party stated: "David Cobb has earned our endorsement in safe states by deftly steering the Green Party toward a nuanced strategy dedicated to ousting Bush, while seeking to grow a grassroots party ... "). Pro-Nader Greens expressed concern that such a strategy compromised the party's independence to an unacceptable degree. The debate about this fundamental issue has by no means been resolved and is sure to continue. As it becomes recognized that the issue is, indeed, complex and that both positions have some merit, the discussion may very well become less rancorous and divisive.

Important to Keep Moving Forward

In order to learn from mistakes, regroup after divisions, benefit from internal debates, build consensus, and take advantage of organizational memory, a party must endure and keep moving forward. The Greens are well aware that prior attempts to build an alternative progressive political force in this country -- Socialist, Progressive, Labor, Citizens, Rainbow -- have failed to reach critical mass, disappearing or stagnating after a few electoral cycles or, at most, a few decades.

It is encouraging that the Green Party survived the difficult circumstances it encountered in 2004. Criticisms regarding the party's pace of growth, lack of cohesion, difficulty with fundraising, etc., need to be taken to heart, but, on the other hand, the critics should acknowledge the fact that among the group of third-party startup initiatives of the 1990s, only the Green Party has shown endurance.

Working in the party's favor is the resonance of the Green politics movement worldwide. Ecological responsibility has emerged as a major theme of twenty-first century political discourse. And, to its credit, the U.S. Green Party has demonstrated a capability to take advantage of opportunity. The Nader/Green campaign of 2000 stepped into the spotlight when the Reform Party unexpectedly imploded and the Gore candidacy fizzled. In 2004 the Cobb campaign skillfully maneuvered into a position where it could spearhead the challenge to the election irregularities in Ohio. (William Rivers Pitt wrote: "The presidential candidates for the Green Party and Libertarian Party deserve the lion's share of praise and credit for the [challenge to the Ohio Electors in the U.S. Congress on Thursday, January 6th] Cobb and Badnarik forced the Democrats to do the right thing, and that made Thursday a banner day for third parties in America." [www.truthout.org.1/7/05])

Endurance in the Face of Crisis

So it turns out that there were some positive highlights to point to in a difficult year. It still remains to be seen whether or not the Green Party can accomplish what no other third party has been able to do in recent memory, i.e., break out of the marginal tier to gain widespread recognition as a viable oppositional force. The Greens must not allow "spoiler aversion" to hold them back. Not only is spoiling inevitable (there is no way to go from 1-4 percent of the vote to 30-40 percent of the vote without passing through levels that are sure to "spoil"), but, moreover, spoiling is an important tool in a third party's arsenal, a way to demonstrate why electoral-system reform is necessary.

Spoiling invariably elicits a degree of vilification -- the Greens simply need to learn to

take the heat. In the face of it, they must not back down from their provocative and consistent challenge to both of the establishment parties. They need to develop an organizational culture oriented toward displacing the Democrats rather than deferring to them. And they need to spark the interest of the broad ranks of the politically disaffected rather than being overly concerned about the reticence of the liberal intelligentsia or the vagaries of the Rep-Dem dance.

Perhaps the exposure to the ABB syndrome of 2004 will help inoculate the Greens against the virus of lesser-evilism going forward. In an article that appeared in *The Nation* after the election, Medea Benjamin wrote: "Many of us in the Green Party made a tremendous compromise by campaigning in swing states for such a miserable standard-bearer for the progressive movement as John Kerry. Well, I've had it.... For those of you willing to keep wading in the muddy waters of the Democratic Party, all power to you. I plan to work with the Greens to get more Green candidates elected to local office" ("Looking Back, Looking Forward," *The Nation* issue of December 20, 2004).



Code Medea 1, by Tara Carreon



Code Medea 2, by Tara Carreon

Woman Found Pushing Dead 3-Year-Old Son in Swing

by Tara Fowler

5/23/15

Police report that a 24-year-old woman was found pushing her dead 3-year-old son in a swing at a Maryland park on Friday.

Officers first responded to the park at just before 7 a.m. after receiving calls about a woman who had been pushing a child in a swing for an unusually long period of time. Police said that the woman, who is not being identified, may have been at the La Plata park since the day before, according to WUSA.

When officers went to take the child out of the swing, "it was instantaneously clear the child was dead," Charles County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Diane Richardson told the Associated Press.

The child's body, which showed no signs of physical trauma, was sent to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore. His mother was taken to a local hospital for a mental evaluation, where she remained Saturday morning, WUSA reports.

Approached with apprehension, 2004 may become viewed in retrospect as the year in which the Greens managed to endure in the face of crisis and even make some breakthroughs and learn some valuable lessons. If the Greens will continue to press forward with their challenge to the two-party system -- boldly, consistently, and at all levels -- it might not be too long before the electorate starts to recognize the Green

Party as the viable new alternative the party is seeking to become.

Addendum:

In my Green Horizon article I discussed the significance of the 2004 campaign from the vantage point of the Green Party, but I did not address the ramifications of the Nader campaign. My own take on the latter can be summarized thus:

- The main positive, enduring result of the 2004 Nader campaign was the graphic demonstration of what lengths the establishment parties will go to when threatened. It was instructive for the third-party movement to see that.
- Nader will make a significant contribution to the movement if he continues to pursue remedies to the ballot-access barriers he encountered during the campaign.
- The 2004 Nader campaign did not yield many other positives. It would take quite a stretch of the imagination to call the campaign a success. A major problematic factor was the dissolution of the Ralph Nader/Green Party alliance. Both sides can be faulted to some extent for this casualty.
- The problem on the Green Party side, as analyzed above, was aversion to being perceived to "again" play the spoiler role. Many Greens got cold feet about the party's association with Nader. Misleadership allowed the anti-Nader forces within the party to jeopardize the relationship.
- There were two problems on Ralph Nader's side, attributable to him and his inner circle of decision makers: 1. They failed to recognize the extent to which the interest in/sympathy for the 2000 candidacy was based on the idea that Nader was working to build a significant, permanent new alternative party. Going "independent" was a mistake. It resulted in loss of support, diversion of precious campaign resources to dealing with ballot-access problems, and a catch-as-catch-can series of unproductive alliances with forces more marginal than the Green Party. 2. They are, as a group, deficient when it comes to working in or with organizations which aren't their own (i.e., organizations they didn't initiate or don't control). In the wake of the 2000 campaign they refused to or didn't know how to do the kind of internal organizational politicking that was needed to play a significant role helping to develop the Green Party into a serious new political force. It was not enough for Nader just to do some fundraisers for the party. He and his colleagues needed to get involved helping to guide or at least influence the Greens. Failure to do so resulted in a lost opportunity.

The Ralph Nader/Green Party alliance had great potential. Without such alliances (with figures of stature like Nader) the Green Party will grow much more slowly. Without organizational support, Nader now goes back to being perceived as a lone wolf -- a heroic reformer who ultimately fell short of making a major impact in the arena of alternative politics.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 9:42 pm**

PART 2 OF 2

Resurgence: The Green Party's Remarkable Transformation

By David Cobb
Green Horizon Quarterly
Winter 2005

A remarkable transformation has taken place in the public's perception of the Green Party. In one sense, you could say we've gone from being seen as spoilers to being hailed as saviors.

In the aftermath of the 2000 stolen presidential election, those who wanted to ignore the hard facts of voter suppression and fraud found the Green Party as an easy scapegoat. Never mind the massive disenfranchisement of African American voters in Florida or the blatantly political and unprecedented maneuvering of the U.S. Supreme Court, blame the outrageous results of the "election" on the Green Party. The die was cast, the spin spun and, to a great extent, the public bought it. The Green Party and our 2000 presidential candidate became persona non grata in many political circles.

Four years later, following another national election plagued by what could charitably be called irregularities, the Green Party has emerged as a champion of democracy.

This happened for two reasons. One, the Cobb/LaMarche Green Party presidential campaign did the right thing in Ohio by seeking a recount of that flawed and fraudulent election in order to protect the integrity of the democratic process. The second reason is because we ran a campaign in the first place. As Woody Allen has been credited with saying, 90 percent of life is just showing up. If we hadn't run a Green Party presidential campaign in 2004, as many people suggested, we would never have had the incredible opportunity of using the Ohio recount to shine a spotlight on the serious deficiencies of a dysfunctional electoral system.

The Ohio recount may be the best thing that has ever happened to the national Green Party. By demanding a recount (in conjunction with Libertarian Party presidential candidate Michael Badnarik), when we had no interest in the outcome of the election, we demonstrated a true nonpartisan commitment to ensuring the right to vote and the right to have all votes counted. By contrast, John Kerry, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, refused to stand up either for himself or for the thousands of Ohioans who stood in line for hours in the rain to vote for him. Kerry never demanded a recount. After considerable hesitation and delay, he did file legal motions in support of our efforts, but that only amounted to saying "me too" to what our attorneys had already submitted. For many Democrats this dismal performance, following on the heels of Gore's botched recount effort in 2000, was simply too much.

The Cobb/LaMarche campaign was inundated with phone calls and e-mail messages from disgruntled Democrats. Thousands contributed financially to make the Ohio recount happen and many volunteered as observers for the recount itself. Many more sent messages saying that they were switching their party registration to Green; others hailed us as patriots.

The pinnacle of our post-election efforts came on January 6, 2005, when Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio and California Senator Barbara Boxer challenged the legitimacy of Ohio's electoral college votes, the first such challenge

since 1877. This historic challenge was preceded by an inspiring rally held in Lafayette Park across from the White House which was organized by our campaign in conjunction with a number of other progressive organizations. I was honored to share a stage with such longtime civil rights activists as Reverend Jesse Jackson and Representative Maxine Waters before joining over four hundred people in a March on the Capitol which stretched for several blocks through the heart of Washington.

Party Continues to Grow

The Green Party continued to grow in 2004. We ran record numbers of candidates, elected more local officials, and registered more Green voters than ever before. Everywhere we went, we found enthusiastic and dedicated Greens hard at work in their local communities.

There is no question that this was an unusual and difficult year to run a Green Party presidential campaign. Although many Greens supported our campaign, others supported either Kerry or Nader/Camejo, dividing an already small constituency even further.

That notwithstanding, the Cobb/LaMarche campaign was a spirited and principled effort embodying the best of Green values. We were unwavering in presenting a clear, alternative progressive agenda to the corporate parties. We told the truth. We consistently referred to John Kerry as a corporatist and militarist who supported the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the USA PATRIOT Act; the racist War on Drugs; the misnamed, one-size-fits-all No Child Left Behind Act; and as someone who failed to support single-payer, universal health care and a living wage for all American workers. Some Greens objected to the fact that we told another truth as well -- that as bad as Kerry was, Bush was worse.

We ran a campaign that was significant not just for what it accomplished, but how we accomplished it. Our ticket was gender balanced; the only major ticket which could make that claim. Our campaign committee operated by consensus. As the presidential candidate, I was only one voice of many. We worked cooperatively in concert with state and local Green parties and we have, as promised, turned over our volunteer and donor lists to the national Green Party. And, despite negative attacks on us, we stayed positive the entire time.

As a result of all the campaigns the Green Party ran, from school boards to the presidency, we trained more activists, recruited more community leaders, and developed more skills and infrastructure. The Green Party is getting bigger, stronger, and better organized in each election cycle.

New Voting Rights Movement

The Green-inspired Ohio recount played a significant role both in the birth of the New Voting Rights Movement and in a fundamental transformation of the political landscape. The recount in Ohio (and in New Mexico) brought together Greens and Libertarians, longtime civil rights activists and new voting rights organizations. Our campaign also worked closely with Representative John Conyers and his staff, Reverend

Jesse Jackson, Rainbow/PUSH, and a new group called the Progressive Democrats of America to document and publicize what went wrong in Ohio and what we can do to fix our broken election system.

Thanks to our part in the Ohio recount, the Green Party has gained new credibility and visibility as well as a leadership role in the New Voting Rights Movement. Election reform is now center-stage and has moved from being a peripheral issue pushed by "fringe" parties to a mainstream concern with the backing of leading civil rights organizations and members of Congress. It wasn't what we could have expected to be the result of our campaign as we set forth with the Cobb/LaMarche presidential campaign, but we did position ourselves to be ready for breakthroughs, and we couldn't be happier with the results.

Narcissism Runs Rampant: Diagnosing the Green Party

By Joshua Frank Published on <http://www.counterpunch.org>, February 25, 2005

The ashes of the 2004 election battle have finally settled, and sadly the Green Party is buried in the rubble still gasping for air. Even so, if you have heard any of the sordid mutterings from staunch Green loyalists, they are spinning quite a different tale.

Take prominent Green apologist, Ted Glick, who has failed miserably at seeing the error of the Green Party's choice to run David Cobb this past year. "[Our vote total] was less than expected," he recently spewed in an online missive, "but the fact is that the cumulative vote for all fourteen 'third party' Presidential candidates on the ballot ... was a little less than 1.2 million." Apparently, to Mr. Glick, such a diagnosis somehow emancipates the Green Party's own tepid performance -- for no third party did exceptionally well.

Not sure if the Greens' vote total was less than expected, however, as David Cobb told CounterPunch during the "height" of his quest for the presidency that he had "no goals for votes." Talk about a schmuck.

The Greens could, and should, have been vociferously opposing the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. But they opted for a "smartgrowth" (read: safe-state) strategy instead, where they'd stay well below the electoral radar. They should have been on the front lines of the campaign scene, denouncing John Kerry and George Bush's neoliberalism and their handling of the downward economic spiral, civil liberties infringements, and environmental catastrophes. But instead the Green Party caved, and regardless of what Ted Glick and others claim, they paid a steep price, getting pounded at the polls as a result. A miserable sixth place.

David Cobb and his running mate Pat LaMarche earned a little over 118,000 votes on November 2, 2004. Even though only half a million people voted for Ralph Nader in 2004 -- a drastic decline compared to four years earlier when 2.8 million people voted Green -- Nader still managed to garner five times as many votes as the Green Party on Election Day '04, despite being vilified by professional leftists, Greens, progressives, and bemused Democrats.

Many still cite the drastic reduction in votes for Nader in 2004 as evidence of failure. But it is wrong to compare his two runs in these terms. In the second case, Nader had no party to back him, and in the wake of the September 11 Anybody-But-Bush hysteria, many who were with Nader in spirit decided to cast their votes for John Kerry in hopes of unseating Bush. Political expediency didn't work however.

The Libertarian Party garnered some 200,000 more votes than Cobb. But who cares, right? Cobb got his wish. For he never wanted votes anyway.

An example of the ruin: In Minnesota, the Green Party has enjoyed majority status since 2000, but is now heading back to the political fringe. Cobb's poor vote total disqualified the Greens from \$400,000 in public subsidies and automatic ballot access in the state. Looks like they will have to start over from scratch in the state, as well as Connecticut, Montana, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, and Rhode Island, where the Green Party lost the presidential ballot access they had acquired during the 2000 election.

The Green Party didn't fare very well in local races either, where Cobb and others claimed they would stay strong. Failing to show up, the Greens were outgunned all across the board by Libertarians, Constitutionalists, Independents, and yes, even Socialists in some cases. But many Greens still claim that they "grew" in '04.

Green Party members Starlene Rankin and Mike Feinstein of California wrote in Green Pages following their November butchering that, "fourteen states ran the most Green candidates ever, and overall at least 431 Greens ran for office in forty-one states.... The Greens won 68 victories out of 431 races in 2004, including 12 city council seats and 18 victories overall in California. There are now a record 221 Greens holding elected office across the U.S."

Growing in numbers doesn't mean growing in strength. Currently the Green Party claims to have exactly 313,186 members in twenty-two states across the U.S. If this is indeed accurate, that means almost 200,000 of those members did not even cast a vote (let alone donate cash) for their party's presidential ticket in 2004.

How the hell can Ted Glick and others claim that this was a "success"? Not to mention their "smart-growth" strategy did not even elect the man they hoped would win: pro-war Democrat John Kerry.

Despite this "growth," sources at the Green Party headquarters reveal they are in dire straits financially. It isn't likely that the Green Party's D.C. office will have to close in the immediate future. Nevertheless if money doesn't start rolling in soon, sources admit, it may well happen down the road.

What is interesting is that Green Party "think tanks" have recently received big bucks from significant Democratic contributors, Richard and Marilyn Mazess of Wisconsin. According to the Federal Election Commission the Mazess clique have given well over \$50,000 to the Democratic Party since 2003. They contributed some money to the Green Party following the election in 2004. And they also tossed Ralph Nader several thousand dollars this past election -- perhaps to cover their own Democratic tracks.

Nonetheless, two spanking new Green Party non profits are now robust and thriving. The Green Institute, which is headed by ex-Green Party Operations Director Dean Myerson, and the Liberty Tree Foundation for Democratic Revolution, which is headed by ex-Green Party Chair Ben Manski (both Cobb backers), have collected a combined \$500,000 from the Mazess duo.

Certainly this raises questions as to which direction the Green Party will proceed in the future. How much influence will these "think tanks" have, especially if the Green Party itself continues to struggle financially? Will it be replaced by these non-profit careerists? Will fruitless "smart-growth" campaigns continue to be the failing Green Party strategy?

To no surprise, David Cobb has parked his ass on the Board of Directors at the Green Institute "think tank." And akin to Theodore Glick, Mr. Cobb still claims his losing campaign strategy was a winner. Narcissism runs rampant indeed.

This is not to say that there aren't spurts of dissension starting to pulsate within the party's grassroots. A quest to take back the Green Party is already underway. Many Greens are coming together under the banner of the "Green Alliance" to shift internal power away from Cobb and others, and back into the hands of the membership. Green Party veteran Peter Camejo, who was Ralph Nader's running mate this past election, is also contemplating the best way to mend the fractures currently leaking what little strength the Green Party has left.

Let's hope that Camejo, the Green Alliance and other likeminded Greens can join forces and topple the current party "leadership." If they aren't successful, 2004 won't be the worst election the Greens will ever endure.

Lessons from the 2004 Elections

By Peter Miguel Camejo
January 2005

The 2004 elections unmasked a great deal of the political realities of our nation. Most readers are aware the media is now under the control of a handful of large corporations all run by right-wing, generally Republican, worshippers of the market. Still it seems so peculiar how the most crucial issues of our time were simply never mentioned during the presidential campaign by either of the two pro-corporate parties.

Except for a pro-pollution quip by Kerry, little was said about the destruction of our planet and economy through global warming. In Missouri, Kerry stated that buying "a great big SUV is terrific, terrific. That's America." Both Kerry, and Bush joined in opposing the Kyoto Protocol during the debates to reassure corporate America of their commitment to profits over a future for our species.

The fact that 90 percent of the people have seen no rise in their inflation-adjusted income over the last thirty years in spite of the doubling of our GDP was of no concern

to Bush or Kerry. The only real income gains went to the richest 1 percent. This income polarization and the growth of an underclass, with our minimum wage dropping (inflation adjusted in present dollars) from \$8.50 to \$5.15 since 1968 was never discussed.

The drop in corporate tax revenues that once provided 33 percent of federal government revenues but today provide only 7.8 percent likewise was particularly a taboo issue. The only comment in this regard was a call by John Kerry for further tax cuts for corporations. His proposal came at a moment when profit margins were the largest ever of GDP and the percentage of the budget from corporate taxes the lowest in decades.

The poorest 20 percent now pay the highest tax rate on their income for state and local taxes throughout the nation. In California the poorest 20 percent pay a rate 57 percent higher than the richest 1 percent of the population who pay the lowest rate of all. The general trend to an ever increasing regressive tax structure and the endless growth of corporate subsidies of course was never mentioned.

We could go on and on. Our antiquated electoral system, the growing violations of our Constitution and the rule of law internationally, and so on were never put before the people. The single most pressing world issue, the war in Iraq, became the centerpiece of the campaign as both Kerry and Bush fought over who was the most pro-war.

The Key to U.S. Elections

There was one peculiar event around the elections that received almost no analysis or discussion. The overwhelming majority of the supporters of John Kerry disagreed with their candidate on most major issues. Even in countries with completely distorted electoral systems, where money dominates and manipulates, it is quite unusual to see people voting massively for someone they consciously disagree with.

This simple fact tells how deep the corruption of the American political system has become. The Boston Globe reported 95 percent of the delegates at the Democratic Party convention opposed Kerry on the war. But these delegates are hopelessly corrupt people. They are part of a system based on careerism and money. They accept the game and call it being realistic. That is to lie to the people, to lie to themselves; to act out a lie does not bother these people at all.

Dennis Kucinich, Howard Dean, and Al Sharpton -- along with all the Democratic "left" -- bought in to the fundamental lie of the presidential campaign. That lie is simple. They tell the people that the Democratic Party is not corrupt, is not an agent of corporate rule, and is not a defender of George Bush and his policies. They do not tell the people the elections are fixed from day one through the control of money and the media. Nor do they speak of the role of the so-called "two-party" system that prevents the real issues from being heard or debated, and that does not allow representative democracy (proportional representation), or even runoffs that would make it possible for people to vote for an opposition candidate. That lie is the essence of our electoral system. And in one sense it is the key issue of the elections.

This fact is a statement on the enormous success of the two-party, pro-money political system developed in the United States. It has achieved getting about half the people simply not to vote, and those who do vote even when they disagree with corporate domination vote in favor of what they oppose. Yet the people believe they somehow have chosen the government. Keeping this system in place is essential for the rule of a tiny minority over the majority in a complex modern economy. Open totalitarianism would have a very deep negative impact on the economy. Far better is the illusion of democracy. Crucial in this equation is the role "progressives," especially many of the liberal intellectuals, play.

Massive Capitulation of Liberals

The fact that the Democratic Party candidate was totally pro-corporate, pro-war, pro-Patriot Act, anti-poor, and against the environment did not stop the bulk of so-called "progressive leaders" from demanding not only a vote for Kerry but respect for corporate domination of our society -- by not having any candidates appear that favored peace, or were anti-corporate. They openly sought to deny those progressives who disagreed with their capitulation to the Democratic Party the ability to express their opinion at the ballot box. In the end approximately half a million people did vote for peace and against corporate domination.

The Nader Factor

Never in our history have we seen such a massive effort to try and prevent an individual, Ralph Nader, from entering the race for the presidency. This massive anti-democracy campaign was led by so-called "progressive" organizations like The Nation and MoveOn.org. Throughout the campaign these groups became more openly direct agents of the Democratic Party.

The only other time in American history where the kind of viciousness expressed against Ralph Nader was ever seen was against the early abolitionists, the Liberty Party candidates (in the 1840s), who were labeled fanatics for daring to challenge the two pro-slavery parties of the time.

Why is this happening? Why the intensification of the broad capitulation of the progressive intelligentsia? For years they have backed the existing system through their subordination to the Democratic Party. But the new level of panic and intensity of their attack against anyone daring to challenge the Democrats is new.

U.S. Turns to Reverse Gains

The answer, I believe, is tied to the shift in the socio-economic reality since the 1970s. After the Second World War the United States made a worldwide effort to take markets from nations weakened by the war, primarily England and France. The move to gain world domination was combined with a campaign to offer concessions at home to win the backing of working people and draw in the power of the trade unions behind corporate international ambitions. Liberal support for the Democrats was associated with concessions. The Democrats, certainly deceivers then as now, acted more as brokers negotiating concessions in return for delivering support from minorities and

working people.

This period ended with the Vietnam War, globalization, and the beginning of the micro-processor revolution during the 1970s. The shift can be traced to the rise of Japan's economy (actually economies throughout Asia in general), and the peak in oil inside the United States.

The U.S. corporate world found itself being challenged by international competitors in new ways. It now wanted to remove some of the concessions granted in the period from the thirties through the sixties. Once the Cold War ended, which left the U.S. as the only world military power, the shift accelerated. At each step the Democratic Party rose to the occasion, blocking any effective opposition to the take-back program of corporate America.

Unions were destroyed (from 37 percent of our workforce to 12 percent), the minimum wage was lowered, social safety nets were dismantled, the income gap widened, and some environmental regulations were lowered.

At each step scattered resistance appeared. As each union was attacked it would try to fight back alone, depending on its "friends" in the Democratic Party. As the corporate rulers saw so little resistance, and it became clear that they could depend on the Democrats' control over minorities and labor (later also the NGOs) they pressed forward with increasing take-back programs. The Patriot Act is now an open challenge to the Bill of Rights. The war in Iraq is an open break with any pretense to respect the rule of law internationally.

Thus the role of the Democrats as the broker-negotiator for labor, minorities, and women for concessions has shifted toward direct support of corporate policy since the 1970s. They now try to convince the people that the Republican pro-corporate platform is really in their own interests. That is, they have become open backers of the shift to the right.

During the 1990s interest in third parties reappeared. Polls showed a lowering in the support for the two parties. The Perot phenomenon showed how shallow the commitment to the two parties was at the beginning of the 1990s. Then in 2000 a nationally known figure, Ralph Nader, came forward with a pro-the-people platform and was backed cautiously by some progressive Democrats, such as Hightower, Moore, Dugger, and others. Ronnie Dugger had formed a "populist" party that would not run candidates lest it upset the Democrats. Other Democrats tried forming a third party that would endorse Democrats, called the New Party. Nothing came of these formations. Only the far more clearly independent progressive Green Party that was willing to run against Democrats began to grow, at least a little, particularly in California.

Democrats were startled. They were doing their job supporting corporate America when suddenly an independent current was beginning to appear. Quickly they set out to stop the Green Party and the Nader phenomenon. Relying on their undemocratic spoiler electoral system, they placed the "blame" for the election of Bush on Nader precisely while they voted for everything Bush asked of them.

By 2004 the Democrats had proved they could contain the opposition and permitted corporate America to confirm Bush as an actually "elected" president. They had scared the Moores, Hightowers, and Duggers back into the fold from which I doubt they will dare stray again. These kinds of capitulations are not quickly reversed. However, if a mass break begins from below, these "progressives" will suddenly once again become interested in third-party politics and once again they will play the role of opposing those who actually are building an independent force.

So far the Democrats have shown they can contain the early attempts to develop a political movement representing the people. The key to the victory for Bush in 2004 was precisely the effectiveness of the Democrats. And the effectiveness of the Democrats was partially reflected in the inability of leading progressives to stand up against what will be recorded, in time, as the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on the American people, the Democratic Party.

The Rise of the Religious Right

These same liberals who cried out against Nader for running are all confused by the reappearance of an old traditional way to control the oppressed in our nation. The use of superstition combined with handouts. The rise of the religious right is the companion to the Democratic Party in controlling the oppressed majority. While a super-oppressed underclass is being created by globalization, including inside the United States, new religious formations are appearing, well funded, offering programs of token material assistance (as the governmental safety net is removed) while indoctrinating people to accept pro-corporate worship of the market with the usual promise of a reward in heaven. This organizing effort of the right is making gains precisely because of the failure of a progressive viable alternative to exist.

Could it get any better for the rich? If you can't brainwash them with superstition you have the Democratic Party "opposition" to corral and control them. It will be hard for corporate America to get the editors of The Nation reading the Bible, but voting Democratic is easy enough and either way it leads in the same direction. Watching the Democrats giving George Bush eighteen standing ovations at the State of the Union address in 2004 tells you all you need to know -- including the moment when Bush called for ending the separation of church and state through his plan to give tax money to these rightist reactionaries who use the cover of being religious outfits.

The rise of Bush and his more open and explicit moves to not only take away socioeconomic concessions but begin to change the traditional framework -- that is the constitutional rights of our political system -- has made the more "progressive" types like The Nation editorial board panic. They have no confidence that the people could ever independently resist these attacks, so instead of helping build an opposition, calling on people to rebel from the Bush/Kerry platform of war and oppression, they call on everyone to forget about the economic take-backs or even the war issue and back the "lesser-evil" of the two pro-corporate, pro-war political organizations, the Democrats.

Their panic, as they begin to finally understand where corporate America is going, is

quite open. They offer no solution. They can only shout words of hate against anyone who points out the dead end of their support for the Democrats. They have only one simple message: "vote Democrat." They offer no platform, no demands on the Democrats. They do not even dare to say to the Democrats: "If you continue to support Bush we won't support you." No, their support for the Democrats is unconditional. It is considered a "reality check" that cannot be altered, like gravity. The fact that 25 percent of our people are no longer registered Democratic or Republican and that polls find 38 percent do not consider themselves supporters of either party is of no concern to them. There is no hope. Surrender, unconditionally, to the rule of the corporate world and ask for mercy, vote Democrat.

Michael Moore is a perfect example. On national TV he called Ralph Nader crazy for daring to run. Moore went on to speak about "we," meaning the future Kerry government, as though there was any connection between what Moore has advocated in his writings and movies and what Kerry would do. This delusional effort which swept an entire current of well-known progressive leaders from Chomsky to Moore has really revealed the failure of that layer to understand the nature of our society and the role of our two-party system. Deep down it shows a lack of belief that the American people could ever rise up and change America.

The Green Party

Within the Green Party this crisis resulted in the appearance of two opposing political currents. One current bent to the liberal capitulation and the other resisted the capitulation. What was new for those of us who have been around for the last fifty years fighting for social justice, peace, and democracy was not the capitulation but the existence of a rather broad resistance, at least in comparison to the sixties where the capitulation to the Democratic Party was quite generic.

Inside the Green Party two documents appeared expressing these two currents. One called for support for the concept of voting for a lesser evil, i.e., the Democratic Party, signed by eighteen leaders of the Green Party. The other, named the Avocado Declaration, called for opposing lesser-evil voting and supporting Green Party independence. The document of the lesser-evil current gave very little historical or socioeconomic explanation to back up the authors' views.

The Green Party nomination of David Cobb for president -- the choice of the lesser-evil current -- over Ralph Nader -- the choice of the independent current -- is now history. But what is not yet fully understood is that Cobb lost the primaries and the state conventions. Thus the Milwaukee convention of 2004 that nominated Cobb introduced another issue and a new crisis into the Green Party: internal democracy. The evidence is so overwhelming that the Milwaukee convention was packed that it is hard for Cobb supporters to deny it. It is sad that they show no remorse nor see the destructive result of rejecting majority rule. It is our hope that the next National Convention will return the Green Party to internal democracy and that Cobb and many of his supporters will help to do so.

The pro-lesser-evil current has every right to fight for their ideas and try to win a majority within the Green Party. If they were to become the majority, the pro-

independence current should respect their right to promote their views in the name of the party. But the grave problem that arose in 2004 is that the lesser-evil current lost the votes of the membership but still succeeded not only in getting control of the convention but getting control of the national Coordinating Committee. The result has been a sharp decline of the Green Party nationally. Its funding has declined and the Green Party's strongest state organizations have begun to feel uneasy with the national leadership.

But in California and New York, the Green Party has continued to grow. In New York, registration in the Green Party grew by the thousands during 2004, now surpassing 40,000, and in California a new record of elected officials hit seventy-seven, while registration remained just under record levels of 160,000. These two states represent by themselves the majority of Greens in the United States and both states side strongly with the pro-independence current.

It is inevitable and normal that the Green Party will have internal differences and debates on these historic issues. As I traveled throughout the country campaigning, I met Green Party organizers who are stunned by what has happened and will leave the Green Party if its internal structure is not democratized.

In the present discussion on returning the Green Party to democracy Marilyn Ditmanson, the Treasurer of the Butte County Greens in California, expressed what many Greens feel when she wrote, "There are those of us who believe that the Green Party is important enough to spend our time to fix it. Right now the Green Party does not represent the will of its people. There are many of us who are on our last campaign for the Green Party -- to bring democracy to the party. If we do not get democracy here we will find a political party or start one where we get democracy."

Across the nation, Green Steve Greenfield of New Paltz, New York, writes, "The will of the great majority as expressed in opinion surveys, primaries and ultimately in the ballot booths was overruled by 'electors' whose prime source of decision power was their ability to afford the transportation to Milwaukee."

It would be quite easy for the Cobb supporters to prove their claim that their victory was legitimate and that they did represent the majority. Take for example Maine, a state where the pro-Democratic Party wing of the Greens is well organized and in control of the Green Party apparatus. Maine is the state where a Green candidate was elected to the state legislature, but who openly announced his support for Kerry. Maine's delegation voted 95 percent for Cobb at the 2004 National Convention. Maine Cobb supporters have one little problem to explain. When the Green Party membership voted for who they supported and who they wanted as delegates they only voted 23.6 percent for Cobb while delivering 29.2 percent for Nader and giving Salzman and Camejo (who both supported Nader) another 12.9 percent, bringing the pro-Nader vote to 42.1 percent.

The Cobb supporters argue the delegates from Maine came around and changed their minds and voted for Cobb. If that were true, then all that the Cobb supporters need to do is present written statements from the nineteen delegates showing that only 23 percent (four delegates) had originally voted for Cobb and the other fifteen of their

nineteen delegates had originally voted for other candidates, mostly pro-Nader, but had changed their minds. That is, that their delegation to the convention reflected their membership.

If they could do that they would have done so long ago. They know what we all know. The pro-Cobb Greens packed the Maine delegation in open disrespect for the will of the membership as was done in many other states. John Rensenbrink, one of Maine's lesser-evil leaders, wrote a piece claiming there was a shift in opinions at the last minute. Rensenbrink added something new in the debate, attempting to red-bait those who support independence. Rensenbrink wrote that the real danger to the Greens is socialists, specifically naming the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) for joining the Green Party.

Rensenbrink is the editor of Green Horizon Quarterly, so you would think he would show some journalistic integrity and indicate some evidence for his assertions. But his statement is not backed by a single fact. Not a single member of the SWP is a member of the Green Party. Nor could Rensenbrink name a single delegate that "changed" his or her mind.

It is true that there are many socialists in the Green Party. Some, like members of Solidarity, have been members for years. Others, like the ISO, have recently joined in some areas. Both have played important and extremely positive roles in strengthening the influence of the Green Party. The ISO in particular has brought large numbers of young activists on campuses to help build Green Party campaigns and has done so in a totally principled manner. Both the ISO, Solidarity, and other socialist groups have helped expand Green Party influence within the labor movement and both have been welcomed by the majority of non-socialist Greens. Certainly that is what I have seen in California.

As Forrest Hill has shown, Cobb at best had about 25 percent support among Greens while those backing Nader had about 60 percent. The convention was stolen. It is not the first time nor will it be the last time a convention is stolen from its membership.

The Cobb supporters have another problem to explain in states where Cobb had lost the primaries or conventions but the convention delegates turned out to be over 90 percent for Cobb. The votes in the election show no such trend of a "shift" to Cobb away from Nader. In Maine, Cobb received 2,942 votes to Nader's 7,997 -- clearly Nader carried the majority of voters who had voted Green in 2004 and who did not vote for Kerry. Amazingly, Cobb support came in just around the percentage he got when the membership voted in Maine. In Wisconsin, we have a similar electoral result. Wisconsin is another Cobb last-minute miracle that gave him 94 percent of the delegates at the Milwaukee convention, but where he had received an even lower percentage of the membership vote than in Maine. But when the votes came in from Wisconsin, Cobb received 2,674 votes to Nader's 18,730, about 12 percent. Once again this reflected the actual vote strength Cobb had inside the Green Party.

Nader's campaign was an alliance between Greens and independents expressed in the Nader/Camejo ticket. The Greens who did not vote for Kerry voted in their overwhelming majority for Nader/Camejo, for a slate that favored independence and

opposed lesser–evil politics.

The battle to build an independent electoral resistance to corporate domination clearly passed through the Green Party in the year 2000. It may not do so in the future unless the Green Party becomes once again a clearly independent political force.

The lesser–evil current in the Green Party has begun to shift more openly to a policy in support of the Democratic Party along the lines originally advocated by the now defunct New Party. Jack Uhrich, one of the more factional Cobb supporters, wrote an article for Green Horizon Quarterly making this view quite explicit. He argues the Green Party is not growing because it does not support Democrats and gives a detailed example in New Mexico. He names which Democrats the Greens should have supported and ends his article by pointing out there is hope since a Green has withdrawn in a race to help the Democrat win. He explains the decline of the Green Party in New Mexico as directly related to its policy of maintaining its independence from the two corporate parties, especially under the influence of Carol Miller, one of the leading pro–democracy and pro–independence Greens in New Mexico.

No Cobb supporter has made any comment disassociating themselves from Jack Uhrich's call for support to Democrats in partisan races. But the evidence continues to mount that the lesser–evil current is a minority in the Green Party. For instance, at the recent state plenary in California, the largest Green Party organization by far, it was clear that only a small minority believes the Green Party as an institution should endorse partisan Democrats.

In other states, like Utah, the lesser–evil wing has promoted splitting the Green Party. In Utah the pro–Cobb current simply declared itself the Green Party and began "expelling" Greens who supported Nader. The treasury of the Green Party was under the control of both a Nader and a Cobb supporter. The Cobb supporter went to the bank and emptied the account, taking all funds to the new "Cobb–only Green Party." The Cobb supporters then went to court seeking to have themselves declared the Green Party of Utah. They lost their requests after several attempts.

The national leadership has done nothing to stop the split in Utah. In fact, not one Cobb supporter has publicly opposed the pro–split action of their current in Utah. In the states where the largest active Green membership exists, the Cobb current is a minority and thus an open attempt to split the party is not likely at this time. The future of the Green Party lies in the balance. Some Greens who favor independence have quit, some on the right are joining the Democrats. There is some discussion of forming a new party, but most Greens believe the present crisis can be overcome. The fact is many of the Cobb supporters want there to be a Green Party and believe in democracy. I believe consensus can be reached on the issue of one person, one vote and a democratic process for nominating presidential candidates or endorsements can be created, in my opinion.

The party must accept and learn to live with conflicting political currents. This issue will dominate the history of the Green Party in the immediate future. As I proposed at the 2004 convention, the best way for Greens to proceed is to allow both currents to promote their strategy and for us to learn from each other, debate, discuss, and

respect each other. My unity proposal at the Milwaukee convention, calling for both Nader and Cobb to be endorsed and allowing each state to respect its internal democracy for ballot status was unfortunately rejected by the Cobb current.

It is clear that such a compromise was not what the Democrats wanted to happen at the Green Party convention. They wanted Nader defeated. The last thing Democrats want is democracy and open discussion. They were overjoyed to hear of Cobb's "victory" at the convention. The Nation immediately ran a congratulatory article quoting only Greens who were Cobb supporters. Open Kerry supporters like Norman Solomon immediately announced he would join the Green Party now that it had come to its senses and was joining in the pro-Kerry effort.

While the Democrats fought tooth and nail to deny Nader ballot status, they tried to help Cobb. In New York, where 15,000 signatures are required, Cobb's small group of supporters were only able to collect 5,000. Even then the Democrats would not challenge their efforts and wanted Cobb on the ballot.

Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) are featuring David Cobb and Medea Benjamin on their Web site and at their national conference, while they rejected allowing Ralph Nader to speak. And of course they would not invite any Green who they did not consider a supporter directly or indirectly of John Kerry. Yet the PDA leadership agrees with the Green Party on many critical issues. Greens should work with them around specific issues. There is nothing wrong per se with Greens attending their conference and speaking at it. The issue is, do we promote their illusion that working in a pro-war, pro-corporate party is the course progressives should take? The lesser-evil current in the Green Party is rapidly moving to an inside/outside strategy because of their illusions in the nature of the Democratic Party. Ted Glick, Jack Uhrich, John Rensenbrink, and Medea Benjamin are among the most open advocates of this view.

The truth is, however, that the Democrats are now in disarray. They can't blame Nader for Bush's electoral victory and they haven't a clue of the role they played in helping Bush win. The polarization economically continues. The war and the attacks on our liberties continue.

Green Party relations with dissenting Democrats are quite important for the Green Party. The key is how this relationship is maintained. We should seek to work with Democrats around issues where we agree. But at the same time we must keep our independence and work to expose the reality of the Democratic Party. It is of great interest to us what happens in the Democratic Party.

While working with progressive Democrats is not the centerpiece to building the Green Party in my opinion, it is a factor both positive and negative. There will be an ideological struggle and collaboration around specific issues with many Democrats. The key is not to ever have the Green Party, as an institution, endorse candidates of the two parties representing the rule of money over people. In the end, a major split in the Democratic Party is inevitable due to the massive internal contradiction between what the Democrats support and who votes for them.

All these events point to our need to focus the growth of the Green Party outside of the

"liberal intellectual" establishment and turn to the layers that, at least in California, have become the strongest base of voter support for the Greens. These include the poorest people, African Americans, Latinos, and youth. Our effort to build an independent alternative is still focused through the Green Party. Hundreds of thousands of people are members of the Green Party. We need to protect, build, unify, and win over the Green Party to a combative, independent stance.

In opposition to that perspective is the rising development from within the lesser-evil current for an inside/outside strategy, where the Green Party openly endorses Democrats, works with progressive Democratic Party organizations, and becomes a "fusion" pressure group from the outside. The problem with such a strategy is that it fails to understand the nature of the Democratic Party as a wholly owned subsidiary of the corporate world. We will never build a people's alternative force that does not see the Democrats as our opponents -- rather than our allies.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 9:43 pm**

PART 1 OF 2

Appendixes

Reexamining the Green Party Nominating Convention: A Statistical Analysis

By Forrest Hill Published on <http://www.greensfornader.net>. September 28, 2004

In this analysis, I review in detail the methods used to allocate delegates to the presidential nominees at the Green Party National Convention and show how they led to the nomination of a candidate supported by a small minority of Green Party members. As you will see, the facts show that if the Green Party leadership had developed a system of voting based on the principle of "one person, one vote" (a system supported by the Green Party and all forces in the world that value democracy), Ralph Nader would have overwhelmingly carried the day and won the party's nomination.

The truth is that the Coordinating Committee (CC) of the United States Green Party, whether intentionally or not, created a voting system for the 2004 convention in Milwaukee that drastically undermined the political power of the majority of registered Greens in the country. This was especially true for Greens in California, where over half the registered Greens live.

In general, the CC extensively reduced the voting power of tens of thousands of Greens by relying heavily on the electoral college to determine the number of delegates for each state. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the number of representatives each state has on the CC is itself a function of the electoral college. For a party that proclaims to support the democratization of our election system (including abolishing the electoral college system) such non-representative democracy in the leadership is a concern.

The CC also developed several other ad hoc formulas, which have little relationship to the size of state party memberships, as a way to proportion delegates among states. The upshot of these formulations is that they allowed David Cobb, relatively unknown among Green Party members and a candidate who received only a small percent of the votes in statewide primaries, to win the Green Party nomination for president in 2004. This has resulted in a crisis within the party, not just because there is little support among the rank-and-file for Cobb, but also because the manner in which Cobb was nominated is perceived by many to have undermined key democratic values supported by the party's platform.

The CC has responded to criticism about the lack of democratic representation at the nominating convention by stating that the formula for delegate allocation in Milwaukee was approved in 2003 and according to Dean Myerson, political director of the USGP, "there were no complaints that it was an 'electoral college' then." While this statement may be true, it only reflects the fact that most Greens were totally unaware of the delegate allocation rules passed by the CC (and most still are), as well as the role the electoral college played in determining the outcome of the convention.

In this article I first critique the allocation rules developed by the national Coordinating Committee to determine the delegation size of each state. I then show how under the CC rules the voting power of an individual Green decreases dramatically across all states as the number of registered Greens in their state increases. Finally, I show what the outcome of the election at the National Convention would have been had the CC insisted on using a modified "one person, one vote" system, in which states where Greens cannot register are assumed to have some minimum number of active members based on empirical evidence.

1. Critique of the Delegate Allocation Rules

One of the arguments made for not using a one person, one vote system is that in many states voters are not allowed to register Green. To try and solve this problem the national Coordinating Committee (CC) approved a system for calculating the number of delegates given to each state based on four criteria: 1. The number of electoral college votes, 2. The number of Greens elected to office, 3. The state's Green voting strength, and 4. The number of delegates each state has on the national Coordinating Committee.

These factors are weighted according to the formulas shown below.

Green Party 2004 Delegate Allocation Rules

Criterion 1: The state's electoral vote 0.5

Criterion 2: Greens elected 2000 through 2003. For each elected Green, award 1 point if the candidate garnered 500 or more votes, and 0.2 points if the candidate garnered less than 500 votes. Also award 0.2 points for each

elected official who switched to the Green party after taking office.

Criterion 3: The state's Green Party Voting Strength 1.75. For most states, this criterion is based on the support presidential contender Ralph Nader received in the 2000 election. A state party may, however, substitute another 2000–2003 statewide race that had both Democratic and Republican opposition. To compute the electoral strength, multiply the number of votes cast for the candidate by the percentage of the statewide vote the candidate received, then divide by 100,000.

Criterion 4: The number of delegates that each state has on the Coordinating Committee 1.75.

Total the points from each of the four criteria and then round up any fractional part to the next largest whole number to determine the number of delegates the state will send to the Green Party Convention.

The fact that the CC decided to use a system that is not based on "one person, one vote" as one of the primary methods for determining the delegate count is a concern. However, what is even more troubling is that in their attempt to create a set of delegate allocation rules they somehow succeeded in creating a system that massively underrepresents the majority of Green Party members.

Below I have highlighted some of the major flaws in CC delegate allocation rules.

Criteria 1 and 4

First of all, Criteria 1 and 4 are essentially identical since the number of delegates that each state has on the Coordinating Committee is determined by the electoral college system (i.e., the number of delegates a state has on the CC equals the number of the state's electoral college vote). Thus, in terms of the proportion of delegates allotted each state, Criteria 1 and 4 yield the exact same result. Added together these criteria can be rewritten as a single rule that simply says the number of delegates a state has at the National Convention equals the number of the state's electoral college vote.

Given that the CC relied so heavily on the electoral college as a predictor of Green Party size in each state, one question we should ask is how well does the electoral college actually predict the number of registered Greens within states other than California (where 53.5 percent of registered Greens reside)?

Figure 1 shows the number of registered Green voters in the twenty-two states where Greens are allowed to register as a function of the number of electoral college votes. There is a small positive correlation only because of the large number of registered Greens in New York relative to other states. However, if we remove New York from this analysis (it is technically a statistical outlier) the correlation between the electoral college vote and the number of registered Greens within states is totally uncorrelated.

This means that for states with less than thirty electoral college votes (i.e., forty-seven states plus the District of Columbia), knowing the number of electors in a state tells you absolutely nothing about the number of registered Greens.

The dash line shows the general trend of the number of registered Greens as a function of the number of electors for states with less than thirty electoral college votes. While this trend is not significant, the fact that it is negative emphasizes how arbitrary and meaningless Criteria 1 and 4 are as rules for allocating delegates (i.e., for the majority of states, the size of their electoral college vote is totally unrelated to their success at building the party).

Criterion 2

The second criterion proposed by the CC to allocate delegates also has some serious flaws. This formula uses a point system based on the number of candidates elected to office between 2000 and 2003 and the number of votes cast for those candidates. The purpose of this rule, we assume, is to allocate delegates to states according to how successful Greens have been at running for office. The major problems with this formula are: 1. it uses an arbitrary low-voting threshold to assign a value to each winning candidate, 2. it ignores the actual number of votes cast for "winning" candidates, 3. it does not distinguish between the relative difficulty of winning various races, and 4. it does not count races in which Green candidates received ten thousand votes, yet lost.

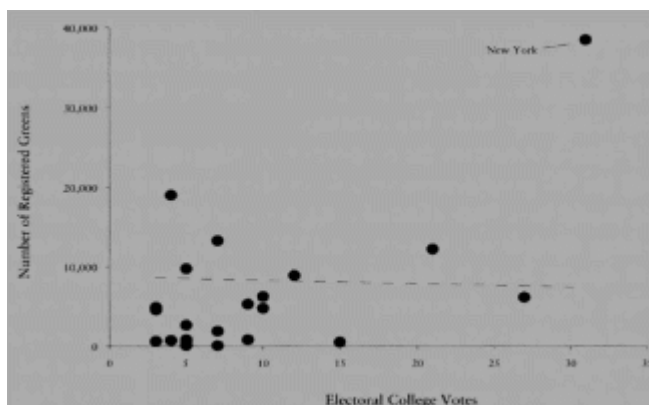


Figure 1. The number of registered Greens in each state (where Greens are allowed to register) as a function of the number of Electoral College Votes in each state. The dashed line shows the predicted trend between Electoral College Votes and Registered Greens for states with less than thirty Electoral College Votes.

The problem with setting a low-voting threshold as a measure of success in local races is that changing the threshold by a relatively small amount drastically changes the proportion of delegates allotted to each state. For example, if the threshold is raised to one thousand votes (a relatively small number of votes to win an election), then Wisconsin and Pennsylvania would see the number of delegates allotted to them under this formula decline by about 40 percent.

If the point of Criterion 2 is to measure the relative number of active Greens in each state (assuming this can be determined by the number of elected Green officials), then

a fairer method of assigning delegates would be to count the actual number of votes cast for winning candidates. Thus, the proportion of delegates allotted to a state is the number of votes cast for winning candidates in that state divided by the total number of votes cast for all winning Green candidates in the United States.

Figure 2 compares the proportion of delegates allotted states using the CC point system formula vs. the proportion of delegates that would have been allotted using the number of votes cast for winning candidates (data are for 2000 to 2003). Only the states with the ten highest delegate counts using these methods are shown. California does pretty much the same under both systems (receiving about 43 percent of the delegates), however, several states such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin would receive a substantially lower percentage of delegates, while Oregon and Washington would increase the size of their delegation by at least a factor of two.

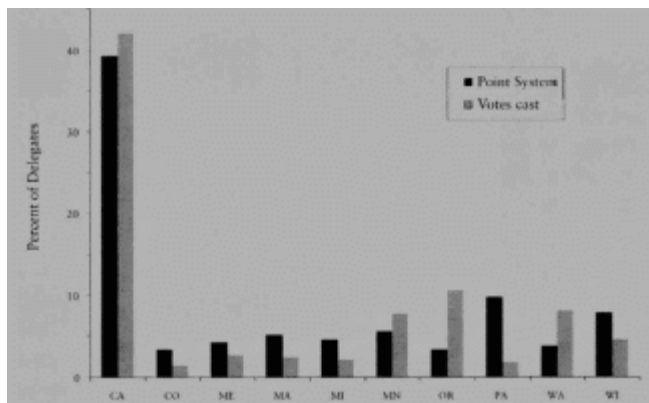


Figure 2. Percent of delegates that were allotted each state using the "winning" candidate point system described in Criterion 2 and the percent that would be allocated based on votes cast for "winning" candidates.

Of course if we want to allocate delegates based on the strength of local elections, why only use the number of votes cast for winning candidates? Since the conditions for winning a race vary greatly from state to state, why not measure local support for the Green Party by adding up the votes cast for all Green candidates in each state? This makes abundant sense when you consider that Laura Wells received 419,873 votes running for state controller yet lost (thus California receives no delegates for her efforts) while the combined vote total for all "winning" candidates in states other than California is 404,602. In fact, in 2002, six Greens ran for statewide offices in California and all of them received over 300,000 votes. On top of that, Matt Gonzalez received more than 100,000 votes running for mayor of San Francisco and was nearly elected to office. Yet, none of these races had any effect on the number of delegates allocated to California under the CC formulation.

In general, it makes no sense to use the number of officeholders as a way of distributing delegates among states. Delegates are supposed to represent a constituency, while the number of candidates holding office can depend on a number of factors that have nothing to do with the size of the Green membership. For example, Wisconsin has won several supervisor seats simply because they were uncontested, while in states like California (where developers are heavily involved in supervisor races), Green candidates usually need to get at least 20,000 votes to win, and are often

heavily outspent by their opponents.

Figure 3 shows there is little relationship between the highly ad hoc method of distributing delegates using Criterion 2 and the number of registered Green voters within states. A correlation analysis between registered Greens and elected Greens is not significant ($P > 0.15$). Thus, given there is no relationship between the number of "winning" candidates and the size of statewide Green membership, this method of proportioning delegates should be dropped.

Criterion 3

The third criterion, the "voting strength of a state," is perhaps the most perplexing concept for allocating delegates, and one wonders what the CC was thinking when they came up with this rule.

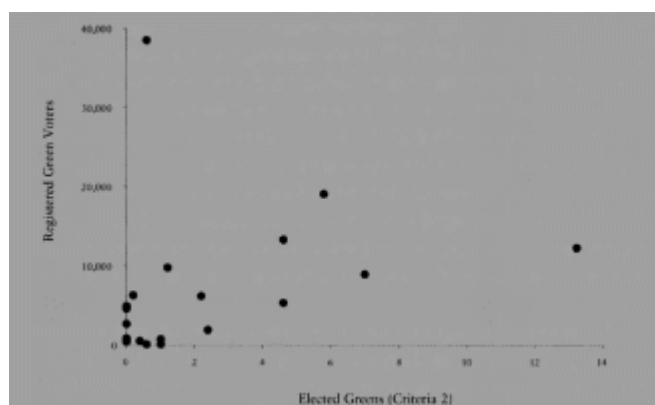


Figure 3. The number of registered Greens in twenty-two states where Greens are allowed to register as a function of the Greens elected to office between 2000 and 2003. The elected Greens score is calculated according to Criterion 2 in the delegate selection rules. Note that California was excluded from this analysis as it represents over half the registered Greens and is a statistical outlier.

The voting strength, as defined by the number and percent of the vote Ralph Nader received in the 2000 presidential election assumes that somehow there is a relationship between the support for Nader in a state and the influence of the Green Party. First, Nader (and his political organization) in part must be given the credit for his support in 2000. Second, since the total number of registered Greens equals about one-tenth the number of votes received by Nader, and Greens tend to vote at the same rate as non-Greens (about 50 percent), the votes received by Nader were overwhelmingly cast by non-Greens. Finally, it is highly ironic that the CC decided to use Nader's showing in 2000 to disenfranchise Nader supporters in 2004.

It should be noted that even though we believe Criterion 3 is a highly arbitrary method of allocating delegates, in the case of California, the CC didn't even apply its own rule correctly. The rule states that the results of another statewide race that had both Democratic and Republican opposition can be substituted for Nader's presidential results. Using the results of Peter Camejo's 2002 gubernatorial race would have increased the delegate count by five in California, while the results from Laura Wells's race for Controller would have increased the delegate count by eight. Such oversight

makes us wonder how accurately the CC applied its own set of ad hoc rules in other states.

Forgoing the will of the many for the few

While the intent of the delegate allocation rules was to allow all states to participate in the nomination of the Green Party presidential candidate, the fact of the matter is they do an incredibly poor job of representing the membership in states where Greens are allowed to register. This is disturbing given these states easily account for 90 percent of the active Greens in the United States. As we will show in the next section, states with large numbers of registered Greens were highly underrepresented at the convention, while states with small memberships were dramatically overrepresented. This heavily biased the voting results toward small states resulting in a victory for David Cobb.

2. Voting Power at the Convention

The defining principle that should have guided the national Coordinating Committee in developing their criteria for delegate allotment is "one person, one vote." It has been argued that since voters cannot legally register as Greens in twenty-seven states, Green Party members in these states would be disenfranchised if registration were the sole criterion used to allocate delegates, while states with high numbers of registered voters would be overrepresented.

Unfortunately, in their zeal to help fledgling states with small Green Party memberships (which is a noble cause), the national Coordinating Committee came up with a delegation formula that not only highly overrepresented small states but massively disenfranchised Green voters in populous states, especially California.

This is easily illustrated by calculating the voting power of Greens in states where they are allowed to register. The voting power is defined as the ratio of the number of national delegates to the number of registered Green voters. Greens from states with a high ratio have greater voting power (or representation) than Greens from states with a low ratio.

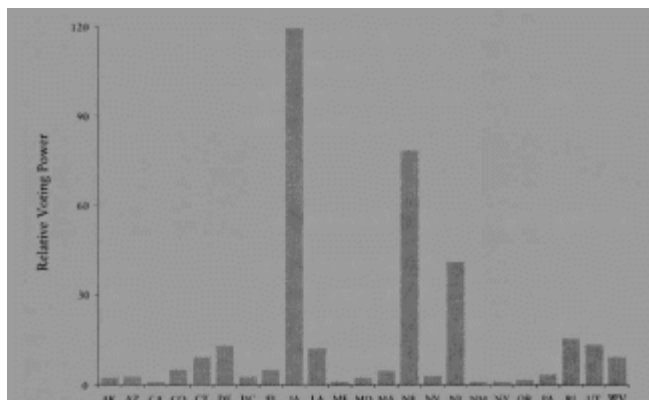


Figure 4a. Relative voting power of Green members at the National Convention in states where Greens can register to vote. Voting power is the number of delegates per registered Green, and the relative voting power is the ratio of the voting power of each

state to the voting power of California (thus CA has a relative voting power of 1).

Figure 4a shows the voting power of each state relative to California, which has a delegate-per-voter ratio of 1/1,200. In general, Green Party members in eighteen states had at least twice the voting power of Californians, and in nine of these states Greens had at least ten times the voting power. More importantly, voting power among states decreases "exponentially" as the number of registered Greens in each state increases (Figure 4b). Thus the CC managed to come up with a system that almost completely disenfranchises the majority of registered Greens in states where they are allowed to register. Including the delegate count from states where Greens are not allowed to register (i.e., where membership is surely not more than a few hundred people) only makes the situation worse.

Given the incredible inadequacies of the CC system to fairly allocate delegates among states, two questions arise: 1) how might we improve on this system to best approximate the principle of "one person, one vote" and 2) what would the outcome of the nominating convention have been if delegates were distributed according to this fundamental democratic principle?

A Democratic Method for Allocating Delegates

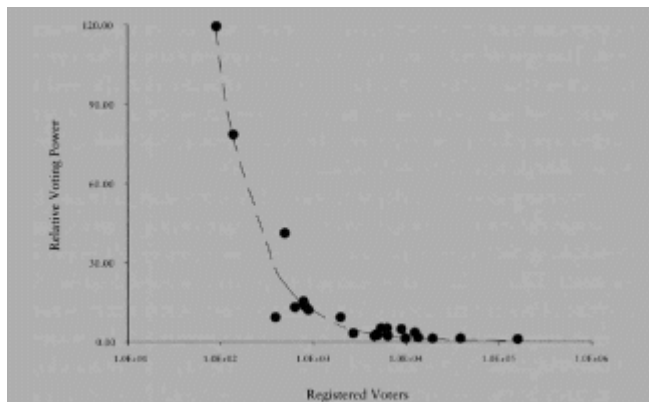


Figure 4b. The relative voting power of each state as a function of the number of registered Green voters. The X axis is on a logarithmic scale indicating that voting power decreases exponentially as the number of registered voters increases.

One way to implement a democratic one person, one vote system of representation given current limits on registration is to assume that states have some minimal number of Green Party members. There are numerous ways this minimum number could be determined. The most restrictive way would be to use the number of registered Greens in the state that has the lowest number of registered voters (in this case Iowa). The problem with this method, however, is that because of potential restrictions on registration in Iowa or other states with low numbers of registered Greens, these numbers would likely underrepresent active membership in several states (for example, Wisconsin).

For the sake of argument, we will assume the minimum number of active Greens in each state is equal to the geometric mean [2] number of Greens in the twelve states with the lowest number of registrants (52 percent of the states where Greens can

register). The number of registered Greens in these states ranges from 90 (Iowa) to 4,832 (Arizona) and the geometric mean number of registered Greens is 825.

To estimate the proportion of delegates allocated to states using a one person, one vote system, we assume that all states, whether Greens can register or not, have "at least" 825 active Green members. This would not only provide a generous estimate of the size of the active membership in states where Greens are not allowed to register, but also increase membership size in seven states where Greens are allowed to register (Delaware, Iowa, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Utah).

The proportion of delegates allotted to each state is found by dividing the number of Greens in each state (using a minimum threshold of 825 Greens per state) by the total number of Greens in all states. Thus California would get 49 percent of the delegates (53 percent of registered Greens live in California), while states where Greens cannot register would each get approximately 0.25 percent of the delegates. So, for example, if there were, say, twelve hundred delegates at the convention, states like Iowa and Rhode Island would get three delegates.

By simply setting a minimum membership size, we ensure that all states are represented, yet create a delegation that fairly represents those states where Greens have been successful in building the party. There are other ways to set this threshold (some may argue for a round number like one thousand or two thousand). However, whatever method is chosen should be based on some sort of empirical evidence.

In essence using a system with a reasonable membership threshold does not punish states for being successful (which makes no sense if our purpose is to grow the Green movement), and provides an incentive for new state organizations to grow their membership.

3. Convention results using the democratic principle "one person, one vote"

The real delegate count

If the National Convention used a one person, one vote system to allocate delegates, what would have been the outcome of the presidential nomination?

To answer this question, we need to know the vote from all state primaries and caucuses.

Mysteriously, the national Green Party Web site, which provides a lot of information on the convention rules and the delegate count for each nominee, never posted the actual results of any state Green Party primary or caucus. Why was this information hidden from the membership? Neither did the Web site report on the turnout at the caucuses, which were often not well attended, nor how many people actually participated in the voting. Again the question is why? Therefore we are forced to work from e-mails.

Based on records from several e-mails, there is a strong indication that voter turnout in the caucus states was small (generally less than one hundred people) and that delegates may not have been proportioned according to the actual vote. For example,

in Maine, Nader received 30 percent of the vote and was awarded six delegates while Cobb received 24 percent and was awarded seven delegates. Even more disconcerting is the fact that almost all the Maine delegates representing Nader voted for Cobb at the convention. Green Party officials must guarantee that delegates who represent a candidate are individuals who support that candidate (i.e., they are not simply appointed). The fear that the delegation was packed with Cobb supporters is one of the reasons a large number of Greens do not accept the results of the 2004 convention.

While we have managed to ascertain the vote in fifteen state caucuses via e-mail communications (see appendix), the vote of the majority of states cannot be found anywhere on the GPUS Web site (this information appears to have been suppressed by the Green Party). Thus, to determine the outcome of the presidential nomination using a one person, one vote election system, we calculated the percent of votes received by each candidate using the delegate count posted on the Green Party's Web site.³ This undoubtedly favors Cobb; however, it is the best information available on how Greens actually voted.

Table 1 shows the percent of delegates that would have been allotted to each candidate under a one person, one vote (OPOV) system versus the CC's delegate allocation rules. There are a couple of points to note. First, the percentage of delegates for Cobb under OPOV is about half of what it was at the national convention. This is due to the fact that most of Cobb's victories were in small states where, as shown above, the voting power of Greens was dramatically elevated under the CC rules. Second, the percentage of delegates allotted to Peter Camejo is more than twice as high under OPOV vs. the CC rules, due to the fact that he overwhelmingly won the California primary, receiving 63 percent of the total vote (or as reported in the press, 75.3 percent of the Greens who actually cast votes). Under OPOV, Camejo has 50 percent more delegates than Cobb, while under the CC rules Cobb is allotted almost three times as many delegates as Camejo. Finally, there is a substantial change in the percentage of uncommitted votes due to a high number of write-in ballots in California.

In general, these patterns indicate that the biggest flaw in the CC voting system was that it massively underrepresented the will of the Green membership in California. This seems particular egregious, given that almost fifty thousand Greens voted in the California primary, while the turnout at any other primaries or caucus meetings (as far as we know) never exceeded one thousand participants.

Table 2 shows the percentage of Greens who supported Nader or candidates running as a stand-in for Nader (Camejo, Miller, and Salzman) versus Cobb. Under a democratic one person, one vote system, the delegates representing Nader supporters outnumber Cobb by more than 2-1, while under the CC rules Cobb received more delegates than all Nader supporters combined. The fact that the CC rules for allocating delegates so drastically alters the outcome of the election is the prime reason that so many Green Party members do not believe the National Convention was legitimate.

Candidate / Delegates OPOV / Delegates CC rules

Peter Camejo	/ 33.4%	/ 15.5%
David Cobb	/ 24.1%	/ 40.1%
Kent Mesplay	/ 1.8%	/ 3.1%
Carol Miller	/ 2.2%	/ 1.2%
Ralph Nader	/ 14.0%	/ 15.3%
Lorna Salzman	/ 8.0%	/ 5.2%
Other	/ 0.9%	/ 4.4%
No Nominee	/ 4.8%	/ 9.6%
Uncommitted	/ 10.8%	/ 5.6%

Table 1: The percentage of delegates allocated to each candidate using a one person, one vote (OPOV) system in which all states are assumed to have at least 825 Green members, and the percentage of delegates allotted under the CC delegate rules.

Candidate	/ Delegates OPOV	/ Delegates CC rules
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Nader Supporters	/ 57.6%	/ 37.2%
David Cobb	/ 24.1%	/ 40.1%

Table 2: The percentage of the delegates allocated to Nader supporters versus Cobb supporters under one person, one vote (OPOV) versus the CC rules.

Outcome of a democratic convention

As many know, Ralph Nader did not seek the Green Party "nomination." The reason he chose this course was because in November of 2003 when he was deciding whether to run for president, the Greens were divided about their national strategy. Many Greens in leadership positions did not want to run a candidate at all, while others only wanted to run in states where the race was not competitive between Republicans and Democrats.

After Nader announced in December that he did not plan to seek the Green Party nomination a lot of Greens began to urge him to reconsider. He finally relented and said that if the Greens decided not to run a candidate that he would accept their endorsement. To help ensure that Nader received the endorsement of the party, several candidates, including Peter Camejo, Carol Miller, and Lorna Salzman, put their names on various ballots around the country to run as stand-ins for Nader. Nader's name was also added belatedly to the ballots of several states.

The voting procedure developed by the CC for the convention stipulated that the only

way the party could endorse Nader (or any other candidate for that matter) was if over 50 percent of the delegation first voted for "no nominee," and over 50 percent of the delegation voted to endorse a candidate using Instant Runoff Voting. [4]

During the first round of voting, the number of votes cast for each candidate was proportional to the number of votes they received (i.e., the results in Table 3). Since no one received a majority of votes during the first round of voting, the nomination process proceeded to a second round of voting, at which point candidates who ran for Nader would have instructed their delegates to vote for "No Nominee."

Table 3 shows the results of the second round of voting under a one person, one vote system. We have not changed the uncommitted category as there is no way to know how they would have voted; however, if these delegates voted in a manner that was consistent with the Green rank and file then most of them would have voted for "No Nominee." Thus under any kind of fair system, it is unlikely that Cobb would have gotten more than 30 percent of the vote and so his nomination should have been resoundingly defeated.

Candidate / Percent of Delegates
No Nominee / 62.4%
David Cobb / 24.1%
Uncommitted / 10.8%
Other / 2.9%

Table 3: Outcome of the second round of voting under a system of one person, one vote representation. The No Nominee category represents the sum of the delegates for Camejo, Miller, Nader, Salzman, and the No Nominee category.

Given that the votes for candidates representing Nader/Camejo accounted for 57.6 percent of the delegates, the endorsement of Nader would have been assured following the defeat of Cobb.

Conclusions

The real tragedy of the 2004 Green Party National Convention is that the party leadership got away with creating a highly undemocratic set of rules, which allowed a candidate with minority support among the rank and file to win the party's nomination for president. It is this point, and not the nomination of David Cobb himself, that has thrown into doubt the legitimacy of the national governing body and its supporters.

To make matters worse, there are several other problems that are not dealt with in this analysis. The first is that the CC implemented a system of voting that denied delegates the right to vote for endorsement without first voting against nominating a candidate.

This problem was exacerbated by making candidates who were running as stand-ins for Nader drop out of the polling after the first round if they themselves were not willing to accept the nomination.

Second, many of the state delegations were packed with Cobb supporters who voted for Cobb after the first round, once they were no longer mandated to vote for one of the pro-Nader candidates. For example, in Maine where Nader and Salzman supporters won the caucus vote and Cobb only received 24 percent of the vote, eighteen out of nineteen delegates voted for Cobb in the second round of voting. The California vote was also not respected by the delegation as many switched to Cobb in the second round of voting. These and other examples have led many Greens to fear that the delegation was intentionally packed with Cobb supporters.

Finally, the behavior of much of the leadership toward Ralph Nader prior to the 2004 National Convention is inexcusable. Between 2001 and 2004 Nader appeared at forty-four Green Party fundraisers in thirty-one states (out of his own costs) and continued to promote the Green Party. In fact, there is no doubt that he has done more to build the Green Party than any other single individual. Yet over the past couple of years he has suffered the slings and arrows of many on the Steering Committee, as well as constant attacks from David Cobb and others for not being registered Green, for not sharing the names of all his donors with the GPUS or the Cobb campaign, and for not doing enough to build the party. It is this attitude that makes many Greens feel the CC intentionally devised their delegate allocation rules to weaken Nader's chance of receiving the party's endorsement.

This paper is not meant to provide a definitive solution of how voting should be carried out at future conventions. It does, however, show the importance of creating a system that fairly represents the Green Party membership. Given that the distribution of party members is heavily consolidated in a few states, using the electoral college (a system which itself does not fairly represent voters in America) to determine the voting power of each state must be stopped. All future elections for the presidential nomination of the Green Party must be based on the "principle" of one person, one vote. To do otherwise will only serve to alienate the membership and continue to divide the party.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 10:08 pm**

PART 2 OF 2

Appendix

Below is a record of the vote in fifteen state caucuses obtained from e-mails sent by members of various state parties. We have no way of knowing whether these are accurate, but we believe they represent the turnout in many of the caucus states.

CONNECTICUT

John Battista

How many attended the state caucus?

Attendance was 49 to pick 15 delegates

Delegates assigned to each candidate

7 Nader, 4 Cobb, 3 No Candidate, 1 Camejo

Second round of voting at the convention

8 Cobb, 7 No Nominee

DELAWARE

How many attended the state caucus?

25 Greens picked 7 delegates

Delegates assigned to each candidate

6 Cobb, 1 Camejo

Second round of voting at the convention

7 Cobb

OHIO

Paul Dumouchelle

Secretary, Green Party of Ohio

How many attended the state caucus?

43 attended the caucus and 46 voted bye-mail to pick 25 delegates

Delegates assigned to each candidate

12 Cobb, 5 Mesplay, 4 No Nominee, 1 Abstention

ILLINOIS

How many attended the state caucus?

Thanks for inquiring. We had about 50 people at the state convention. About 40 of them were qualified members of the Illinois Green Party. I believe about 35 (of the 40) participated in the nominating portion of the convention.

How many registered Greens are there in IL? If not a registration state, what is the membership of the GPIL?

We don't have any registered Greens, as Illinois does not allow you to register as a party member. The only current indication of party in Illinois is a record of which ballot you choose at a primary, which (with a few local exceptions) the Illinois Green Party has not yet qualified for. We do however have approximately 500 members of the IGP.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

11 Cobb, 4 Mesplay, 7 No Nominee

MARYLAND

From Kevin Zeese

How many attended the state caucus?

60 people picked 12 delegates

Delegates assigned to each candidate

5 Cobb, 3 Camejo, 2 No Nominee, 1 Nader, 1 Miller

MAINE

Ben Meiklejohn

How many attended the state caucus?

A total 171 votes cast statewide, Ralph Nader has earned the most votes with 51 total or 30 percent of all votes cast (excluding abstentions). David Cobb received 41 votes, or 24 percent. The rest of the votes were divided among 13 candidates.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

7 Cobb, 6 Nader, 2 None of the Above (NOTA), 2 uncommitted

Second round of voting at the Convention

18 Cobb, 1 No Nominee

MICHIGAN

From Marc

How many attended the state caucus?

Total vote count over the two-day period was 85

How many registered Greens are there in MI? If not a registration state, what is the membership of the GPMI?

We can't register. Our membership was last stated at 483 dues-paying members.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

13 Bier-Beemon (favorite daughter), 10 Nader, 8 Cobb, 1

Mesplay

NEBRASKA

Conversation with Dante:

How many attended the state caucus?

Don't make me cry. We only had 40 at the most. We weren't that big to begin with and with the state of things we're even smaller.

How many registered Greens are there in NE? If not a registration state, what is the membership of the GPNE?

We are partly a registration state meaning that only 1 of the 3 districts have ballot access. That district has just over 100 registered members.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

9 delegates for Cobb

NEW JERSEY

How many attended the state caucus?

75 people attended (total GPNJ dues-paying membership is approximately 280).

Delegates assigned to each candidate

9 Nader, 4 Cobb, 3 Uncommitted, 1 No Candidate

NORTH CAROLINA

From Gray Newman

How many attended the state caucus?

We had 14 Greens from our locals pick 10 delegates for the convention. We have plus or minus 250 Greens in our locals but I know of quite a few more who do not live near

locals.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

8 Cobb, 1 Camejo, 1 Salzman

GEORGIA

Joell

How many attended the state caucus?

In Georgia the State Green Convention location was changed three times. Eventually it was held in Savannah and was attended by 17 Greens. While Georgia GP has never attained State Party status (11,000 write-in votes were cast for Nader in 2000), they were allotted 11 delegates to the convention.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

11 for Cobb

PENNSYLVANIA

How many attended the state caucus?

250

Vote

99 Cobb, 74 Nader, 62 No Candidate/Abstain, 3 Other, 1 Camejo

Delegates assigned to each candidate

16 Cobb, 12 Nader, 9 NOTA

TENNESSEE

From Katey Culver

How many attended the state caucus?

The Green Party of Tennessee Annual Meeting and 2004 Convention was held Fri–Sun May 21–23. Twenty-five Greens were at the meeting; also attending were two teenagers, six toddlers, and two cooks.

Vote

The actual tally was 19 voting members; 17 Cobb, 1 NOTA, 1 Camejo

Delegates assigned to each candidate

9 Cobb, 1 NOTA

TEXAS

Source: David Pollard

How many attended the state caucus?

There were 55 certified state delegates and about a dozen alternates that picked the 35 delegates for the convention

How many delegates will actually attend the National Convention?

Currently we have 19 people expecting to go to the expense of traveling and lodging up in Milwaukee. If less than 18 actually are able to make it to the convention, Texas will not be able to vote its full allotment of delegates at the convention. So there is to a small degree a self-limiting factor for states that are disinterested in the presidential campaign.

Delegates assigned to each candidate

25 Cobb, 9 No Nominee, 1 Camejo/Mesplay

Second round of voting at the convention

34 Cobb, 1 No Nominee

WISCONSIN

How many attended the state caucus?

596 people attended with 102 of 134 districts reporting. Some of the organized caucuses had no participants.

Vote

NO CANDIDATE / 130 votes / 22.41%

NONE OF THE ABOVE / 105 votes / 18.10%

UNDECIDED / 104 votes / 17.93%

WRITE-IN / 93 votes / 16.03%

DAVID COBB / 70 votes / 12.07%

LORNA SALZMAN / 28 votes / 4.83%

PETER CAMEJO / 24 votes / 4.14%

KENT MESPLAY / 8 votes / 1.38%

CAROL MILLER / 7 votes / 1.21%

PAUL GLOVER / 6 votes / 1.03%

NO ENDORSEMENT / 3 votes / 0.52%

SHEILA BILYEAU / 2 votes / 0.34%

Second round of voting at the Convention

31 Cobb, 1 Mesplay, 1 No Nominee

ARKANSAS

From Anita, no response on number attending.

Arkansas' seven delegates to the National Convention will be committed to David Cobb as a result of voting at our state convention today. The decision was unanimous.

Proposals to the GPUS from Greens for Democracy and Independence

Presented at GPUS National Committee meeting, July 21–24, 2005

Proposal ID 153

Proposal: Strengthening Internal Democracy in the GPUS

Presenters: Green Party of New York State, Green Party of Vermont

Discussion: July 4–24, 2005

Voting: July 25–31, 2005

Background

To maintain our party's unity we must institute internal democratic reforms that ensure that all viewpoints are respected, all members can participate fully in the institutions of the party, and all decisions truly reflect the will of the Green Party membership.

In order to strengthen internal democracy in the Green Party of the United States, we ask the State Committee of the Green Party of New York State to approve the following proposals.

Proposal

The Green Party of New York and the Green Party of Vermont call upon the GPUS to strengthen internal democracy by adopting a national policy based on the principle of one person, one vote.

To facilitate the adoption of one person, one vote, we call upon the GPUS to require all accredited state parties to estimate the size of their state membership relative to other states, and that a neutral commission be set up to evaluate the claims made by each state.

One Person, One Vote

It is imperative that all members in the Green Party recognize that our national decisions reflect the true will of our members and that their opinions and votes are fully counted and respected.

The Green Party internal structures must correspond with the principle of one person, one vote. No member of the Green Party may have more or less representation than any other Green Party member when selecting the party's presidential ticket and its national leadership bodies.

State representatives to national leadership bodies and selection of delegates for National Conventions must correspond to the principle of one person, one vote. Any existing regulations that conflict with this principle are invalid and must be adjusted to correspond to it.

The principle of one person, one vote must be respected along with our principles of gender parity and diversity on the issues the party has declared relevant for our nation and our time.

Determining State Membership Size

Before the Green Party can implement one person, one vote representation, we must develop methods to fairly determine the membership size of each state. Given that more than half of the states in the United States do not allow citizens to register for any third political party, each state party will have to use different methods for estimating membership sizes.

States can estimate their membership size using registration numbers, number of elected Greens, votes cast for local, statewide, or presidential Green candidates, or whatever method they deem appropriate. All estimates by any one state must be contrasted with estimates from all other states to determine the overall percentage of delegates allotted that state.

Neutral Commission to Certify Membership Size

Based on the principle above, a special commission should be established that, as

clearly as possible, represents the Green Party members and its differing political currents, geographic spread, and other factors such as gender and race. The commission will be selected by the National Committee and will meet every two years in odd numbered years.

Each state will be asked to provide an estimate of their membership size based on any combination of direct and/or indirect methods they deem as appropriate. The commission will review each state's claims and their premises. They will either agree or make their own estimate. In cases where there is disagreement between the committee and a state, every attempt will be made by both parties to resolve the dispute.

Once the membership size for each state has been certified by the commission, these values will be used to determine the proportion of representation each state gets in our national governing bodies and at the National Convention.

Representation for delegates and for ejection of the National Committee members will follow the certification of membership state by state in a formula that will be based on a one person, one vote criterion.

This proposal does not provide a rule or bylaw change; it is a call for rulemaking. It is a general resolution that provides guidance and recommendations for a working group established to craft and introduce proposals for actual rules or bylaw amendments. Such a working group would be convening under a charge to formulate proposals that are in accordance with the general principles outlined in each proposal and would be presented to the National Committee in the form of proposed bylaws and/or rules and procedures. The working group should be called into existence immediately upon adoption of this resolution, include members from all GPUS member states and caucuses, and submit formal proposals to the National Committee within ninety days of this resolution's adoption. The resulting proposals, wherever they consist of rules or bylaws or changes to rules or bylaws will require a two-thirds vote of the National Committee in order to pass.

Timeline

This proposal is to be presented for vote to the 2005 National Committee meeting, to be held July 21–24, 2005.

Proposal ID 154

Proposal: Delegate Selection to the National Convention

Presenter: Green Party of New York State, Green Party of Vermont

Discussion: July 4–24, 2005

Voting: July 25–31, 2005

Proposal

The Green Party of New York and the Green Party of Vermont call upon the GPUS to strengthen internal democracy in the selection of delegates to our leadership bodies and to the presidential nominating convention, based on the principle of one person, one vote.

To facilitate this process we call upon the GPUS to require that the selection of delegates to our National Convention respect the vote of the membership by ensuring that:

- 1) The number of delegates pledged to each candidate is proportioned according to the vote, whether a state uses primary, regional caucus, or a state nominating convention to choose a presidential nominee.
- 2) A delegate may not go to the National Convention representing a candidate (or proposal) that they did not vote for in their state's primary or caucus, unless specifically bound to support that candidate (or proposal).
- 3) During the first round of voting at the National Convention, delegates must vote for their designated candidate (or proposal position) to ensure that the will of the membership is respected. Should a second round be necessary, the delegates from any state may cast votes in accordance with instructions from their own state party organizations should such instructions be issued, or be free to vote their conscience if no such instructions are given. In all subsequent rounds, delegates are free to vote their conscience based on what they believe is the best for the Green Party.
- 4) Where possible, state Green parties should hold official primaries to facilitate the greatest possible participation by their members. Where no primaries exist, every effort should be made to ensure that all state party members receive ballots. The GPUS should help facilitate these efforts in cases where the states have limited resources to poll their membership. In all cases, the GPUS should report the number of voters participating in a state election and the number of votes received by each candidate on their Web site.

This proposal does not provide a rule or bylaw change; it is a call for rulemaking. It is a general resolution that provides guidance and recommendations for a working group established to craft and introduce proposals for actual rules or bylaw amendments. Such a working group would be convening under a charge to formulate proposals that are in accordance with the general principles outlined in each proposal and would be presented to the National Committee in the form of proposed bylaws and/or rules and procedures. The working group should be called into existence immediately upon adoption of this resolution, include members from all GPUS member states and caucuses, and submit formal proposals to the National Committee within ninety days of this resolution's adoption. The resulting proposals, wherever they consist of rules or bylaws or changes to rules or bylaws will require a two-thirds vote of the National Committee in order to pass.

Timeline

This proposal is to be presented for vote to the 2005 national Green Party meeting, to

be held July 21–24, 2005.

Proposal ID 155

Proposal: Green Party Affirmation of Independence

Presenter: Green Party of New York State, Green Party of Vermont

Background

If the Green Party does not affirm its independence from the corporate parties, its existence will be compromised and its unity endangered. Furthermore, the Green Party will face internal strife and conflict as Greens debate which Democrat or Republican qualifies or does not qualify for support.

A policy of political independence is fundamental to our future growth and survival as a political party and should be as universal as our Ten Key Values.

In order to make political independence a policy in the Green Party of the United States, the Green Party of New York and the Green Party of Vermont ask GPUS to approve the following proposal.

Proposal

The Green Party of New York and the Green Party of Vermont call upon the GPUS to affirm its complete political independence from the Democratic and Republican Parties by adopting a national policy that states and acknowledges the following:

- 1) That the institution of the Green Party of the United States, as defined by its national organizations and by its presidential and vice presidential candidates, will not endorse, place on its ballot lines, urge a vote for, raise funds for, urge a vote against, or otherwise oppose just one of the two corporate party candidates (which amounts to backhanded support for the other corporate party candidate), or in any way run its campaign or make any GPUS resources available to assist either or both major corporate-supported parties or their partisan candidates. The GPUS urges its member state parties to observe these principles in their conduct of state campaigns and general operations, and recommends that all state parties adopt this as policy.
- 2) That an endorsement by the Green Party of corporate-controlled parties and their partisan candidates represents a movement away from the core of our founding principles of the Ten Key Values and toward the dissipation of our political identity, and therefore, while state Green parties have the unfettered right to name and/or endorse candidates in any manner of their own choosing with no interference or intrusion by GPUS, it is GPUS policy to not grant support of any kind to partisan candidates of any corporate-supported party through the Coordinated Campaign Committee (CCC), official GPUS media, or activities of GPUS standing committees and caucuses.
- 3) That, as an independent political party, it is not only our right, but our duty to

politically challenge the corporate parties in elections and to make demands of them to foster greater electoral democracy in America. This affirmation does not apply to other third parties or independent candidates whose platform reflects our Ten Key Values. We recognize that we do not live in a representative democracy and that to build such a democracy we must work with other political organizations. Thus, the Green Party may endorse and work with other political parties or candidates that are independent of corporate domination and where there is agreement on issues in harmony with our Ten Key Values.

This affirmation does not in any way restrict the Green Party, or its members, from working with individuals from the corporate parties on issues we support such as non-violence, social justice, electoral reform, or environmental sustainability. The Green Party is not a centralized party. It welcomes political diversity and encourages its members to express their views openly and publicly on any matter they wish, including the right to support, work for, or vote for a candidate from any party. Members may do so as individuals, as organized committees, as members of state organizations, county organizations, county committees, or as members of a local Green Party chapter. Such action does not contradict the Green Party's institutional independence, since these individuals or organizations are autonomous and do not represent the official policy of the Green Party of the United States itself.

This proposal does not provide a rule or bylaw change; it is a call for rulemaking. It is a general resolution that provides guidance and recommendations for a working group established to craft and introduce proposals for actual rules or bylaw amendments. Such a working group would be convening under a charge to formulate proposals that are in accordance with the general principles outlined in each proposal and would be presented to the National Committee in the form of proposed bylaws and/or rules and procedures. The working group should be called into existence immediately upon adoption of this resolution, include members from all GPUS member states and caucuses, and submit formal proposals to the National Committee within ninety days of this resolution's adoption. The resulting proposals, wherever they consist of rules or bylaws or changes to rules or bylaws will require a two-thirds vote of the National Committee in order to pass.

References

This proposal is to be presented for vote at the 2005 National Committee meeting, to be held July 21–24, 2005.

Which Way Forward for the Green Party?

By Ashley Smith and Forrest Hill August 26, 2005

At the July 21–24, 2005, National Committee meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Green Party arrived at a fork in the road. The delegates voted down resolutions offered by Greens for Democracy and Independence designed to ensure proportional representation inside the party, national delegates accountable to the expressed will of

the membership, and political independence from the two corporate parties.

This vote seems to fly in the face of everything that the Green Party stands for.

As Maryland senatorial candidate and Green Party member Kevin Zeese rightly points out, "the overwhelming majority of Greens support real democracy -- based on the principle of one person, one vote -- and want the Green Party to stand for something different than the Democrats or Republicans."

"The Tulsa decisions exacerbate the already growing rift in the party. The ramifications of these decisions must be reversed if the Greens are to truly challenge the corporate parties. This can only happen if Greens across the country are willing to fight to take back their party. Only an uprising by the membership will reinvigorate the Green Party," added Zeese.

At Tulsa, two currents came into conflict over the future of the party, a radical wing embodied by the Greens for Democracy and Independence (GDI) and a liberal wing that supports internal policy-making over political organizing.

GDI argues that the Green Party must become the political expression of the living social movements to challenge the corporate duopoly at the ballot box. It came into being to resolve the political and organizational crisis that wreaked havoc in the Green Party during the 2004 election.

The crisis started in the period leading up to the nomination of Green presidential candidate David Cobb, who argued for a "safe states strategy" in battleground states during the 2004 election campaign. This tactic was viewed by many Greens as a backhanded way of adopting a political strategy of capitulation to the Democratic Party in order to defeat Bush.

The safe-state strategy was supported primarily by small state parties, who were disproportionately represented at the 2004 National Convention. Based on this undemocratic apportionment, Cobb won the nomination, and for the first time ever, the Green Party embraced a lesser-evil political strategy.

The Cobb campaign for president garnered only about 120,000 votes, or about one-third of the registered Greens in the country. More importantly, there was virtually no support for Cobb from activists outside the party. As a result of this disastrous showing, Green parties in several states lost their ballot lines.

Since the election, the division between GDI supporters and the liberal wing of the national Green Party has become more apparent.

Many in the liberal wing have aligned themselves with organizations like the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), whose stated aim is to transform the Democratic Party from within. In fact, David Cobb has appeared on many PDA panels and is prominently featured on their Web site.

The PDA is organizing to bring progressive activists into the Democratic Party, with the

hope that it can be transformed from within. If the AFL-CIO -- which is heavily involved in the Democratic Party and backed by millions of members -- has failed in this effort, the PDA with its meager forces stands no chance of succeeding. The PDA has a greater chance of derailing the Green Party's efforts to challenge the corporate parties, than moving the Democrats to the left.

Greens for Independence and Democracy seek to reassert the central mission of the Green Party as the political arm of the social movements. GDI has been the driving force in developing proposals to institute democratic reforms and assert the independence of the Green Party from the corporate parties. GDI has presented these proposals publicly on its Web site and at state party meetings, where they have won majority support from state parties in New York, California, Florida, Vermont, and Utah -- parties that represent the majority of Greens in the country.

Divisions Intensify in Tulsa

The Tulsa meeting was essentially a contest between the two wings of the party played out through the same undemocratic apportionment scheme that distorted the outcome of the 2004 Milwaukee convention. Under this scheme California and New York have only about 16 percent of the votes on the National Committee (NC), even though more than two-thirds of all registered Greens live in these two states.

Since liberal delegates to the NC overwhelmingly represent the smaller state parties -- many with less than one hundred members -- they control almost two-thirds of the vote. Delegates from states supporting GDI represent most of the Greens in the country, yet are a minority voting bloc on the NC.

Conflict between the two wings erupted early in the convention over which delegates to seat from Utah, a state where two groups claim to be the official Green Party. The original Utah Greens split into two factions in 2004 over which candidate -- Cobb or Nader -- to put on their state's ballot line. The leadership body only recognizes the "Cobb Party," while the "Nader Party" is recognized as the official Green Party in Utah by the secretary of state's office.

During roll call, the "Cobb Party" delegates were automatically seated by the leadership body. GDI delegates later protested this decision and proposed seating one Utah delegate from each party. This proposal was voted down by the liberal wing fifty-seven to thirty-four (with four abstentions).

Following this skirmish, Peter Camejo and David Cobb spoke to the body, each describing a different strategy for the future of the party.

Camejo stressed building the Green Party as the political expression of the mass social movements. He supported allowing many political tendencies to exist in the party. He even went so far as to apologize to David Cobb for any misstatements he may have made against him during the campaign. Finally, he called upon the Green Party to stand up to the Democrats and argued its independent challenge to the two-party system is "the spirit of the future."

Cobb repeated many of Camejo's points, but then emphasized an exclusionary message. Condemning what he called sectarianism -- his label for anyone who opposed his safe-states strategy, or believed in building a left wing of the party. In an answer to a question after his speech, Cobb denounced CounterPunch's Alexander Cockburn, saying that he "represents why the sectarian left has failed." The not-so-subtle message was that the Green Party should exclude those who oppose supporting liberal Democrats in their election campaigns.

The GDI Proposals

The real conflict in Tulsa broke out when GDI presented their proposals on internal democracy and independence to the NC. Since these proposals had already been passed by several state parties and discussed on the NC's listserv, GDI encouraged all delegates to provide comments, concerns, and amendments.

The liberal wing did not argue against the content of the proposals. Instead they raised objections concerning bylaws, implementation, and procedure.

After a long period of debate -- during which the governing Steering Committee (SC) left the room to caucus (without explanation) and anti-GDI forces lead delegates in doing "the Wave" and singing "Oklahoma" and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" -- the NC voted down all three proposals by an average vote of fifty-eight to thirty-four (with three abstentions).

The vote on the GDI proposals completely mirrored the vote to seat both Utah delegations, and drew a clear delineation between the two factions of the party. There is no question that the undemocratic apportionment scheme has allowed a liberal bloc of delegates to gain the upper hand in the national leadership body of the Green Party.

As one GDI member put it, "If the liberal wing is able to maintain its dominance of the party and orient the Greens into subordinating themselves to the Democratic Party, the Green Party will likely wither away like the Working Families Party and the New Party before them."

The Future of GDI

The opportunity and responsibility for GDI members is immense. The Democrats continue to ratify the Bush administration's program and thereby keep stoking frustration with the two-party system. The Democrats continue to support the occupation of Iraq, voted for the renewal of the Patriot Act, gave the margin of victory for the passage of CAFTA in the Senate, and stand prepared to confirm the nomination of antiabortion Reaganite John Roberts to the Supreme Court.

Today, millions of workers, women, gays, Latinos, Blacks, Arabs, Muslims, and other oppressed populations find no electoral expression within the two corporate parties for their demands and aspirations. Many have grown frustrated with the failure of the lesser-evil strategy of voting for the Democrats and are looking for an alternative. Unfortunately, the present leadership of the Green Party is set to direct them right back into the arms of the Democratic Party.

In 2004, leaders of all the various social movements suspended their efforts in order to mobilize the vote for Kerry -- even though Kerry opposed almost all of their demands. Nine months after the election those social movements are still demobilized. Hopefully, the demonstration against the war scheduled for September 24 will mark the return of mass social movements after a long hiatus for the elections.

The disenfranchised in America form a large latent electoral force, which GDI and supporting state Green parties must connect with to renew the Green Party. Such a coalition offers the hope of galvanizing the Greens and the broader social movements to build a genuine third party rooted in this country's excluded majority and its mass movements that will fight and not join the corporate parties.

The contest between the two visions of the Green Party as expressed by the two wings of the NC is not just a fight for the soul of the Green Party, it is a fight to win the hearts and minds of people to break with lesser-evilism and build a no-holds-barred challenge to corporate politics. It is also a fight for maintaining and growing the social movements during election periods.

While the current undemocratic NC of the Green Party is taking the road back to the Democratic Party, the GDI current is considering how to galvanize individuals and state parties to take the road of democracy and independence.

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

by **admin**

Posted: **Mon Aug 10, 2015 10:25 pm**

Notes

Introduction

1. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking on why he came out against the war in Vietnam despite the condemnations he expected from liberals and civil rights leaders, in "To Chart Our Course for the Future" (address at SCLC Ministers Leadership Training Program, Miami, February 23, 1968) in The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., ed. Clayborne Carson (New York: Warner Books, 1998).
2. Peter Miguel Camejo, "Green Party Unity," June 14, 2004, published on <http://www.avocadoeducationproject.org>. Reprinted in this collection.
3. An analysis of the National Election Study exit poll data by Harvard political scientist Barry Burden shows that only 9 percent of the people who thought Nader was the best candidate actually voted for him. If people had not voted strategically for the lesser evil, Nader would have had over 30 million votes instead of 2.9 million and might have won the election, especially if he had been allowed into the debates. Burden also shows that Nader would have won the 2000 election using the Condorcet system of preference voting in which voters rank each candidate against every other candidate, the system that most votingsystem experts consider the fairest and most accurate way to reflect voters' preferences. 2000 was the only presidential election for which there is

exit polling data to conduct a Condorcet election retrospectively in which the Condorcet winner was not the actual winner. See Barry C. Burden, "Minor Parties and Strategic Voting in Recent U.S. Presidential Elections," *Electoral Studies*, in press, available online at <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~burdenlesfinal.pdf>.

4. Mitofsky International, "California Recall Election Exit Poll -- October 7, 2003," available at <http://www.mitofskyinternational.com/california/CAGV0230H.HTM>.

5. J. R. Ross, "Greens Reject Endorsement of Ralph Nader," Associated Press, June 26, 2004; Rick Lyman, "Greens Pick a Candidate Not Named Nader," *New York Times*, June 27, 2004; "Greens Reject Nader Endorsement, Back Cobb," MSNBC.com, June 27, 2004; Rupert Cornwall, "Greens Reject Nader Bid for White House," *The Independent (UK)*, June 29, 2004.

6. P. J. Huffstutter, "Green Party's Choice Could Be Kerry Boost," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 2004.

7. Available online at <http://www.pollingreport.com/wh04gen.htm>. Another reason for the decline in Nader's support in opinion polls was that polling organizations did not include Nader as an option in polls in states where he was denied a ballot line, which came to fifteen states in total after Labor Day.

8. The representation formula read:

"States will be allocated delegates slots based on the following formula:

1) Number of Electoral College members multiplied by 0.5

2) Number of Coordinating Committee members multiplied by 1.75

3) Number of Elected Greens that are listed by and accepted by the Coordinated Campaign Committee* on or before 12/31/03 multiplied by 1.00

[*] Electeds who received 500 or more votes will be given a value of 1, Electeds who received less than 500 votes or no vote totals known by the CCC will receive a value of 0.2.

4) Election Strength [*] derived from the 2000 Presidential Election multiplied by 1.75. States wishing to use a statewide race may do so as long as the Green candidate had Democratic and Republican opposition.

[*] number of votes for Nader multiplied by percentage of Nader's vote in the state divided by 100,000.

Add the four factors together and round up. This number will equal the number of delegates."

(Gray Newman, "[usgp-coo] corrected additional language to AC proposal," Coordinating Committee e-mail list, November 11, 2003)

This formula was never actually voted on by the Coordinating Committee (now called the National Committee), but only posted to the National Committee e-mail list during the week of voting on the accreditation rules proposal, which had listed the number of delegates for each state without describing the method by which the numbers were determined. (See Proposal 55: Accreditation of Delegates to the 2004 Nominating Convention at <http://green.gpus.org/cgi-bin/vote/propdetail?pid=55>.)

Expressed mathematically, the total delegates for a state were $(.5 \times \text{electoral college vote}) + (1.75 \times \text{Coordinating Committee delegates}) + (1 \times \text{Elected Greens}) + (1.75 \times \text{Statewide Green vote, Nader 2000 or other})$.

At the abstract level, the formula weighted the factors as follows:

10% to the electoral college vote
35% to National Committee delegates
20% to Elected Greens
35% to Statewide Green vote (Nader 2000 or other)

Because most states did not have elected Greens and some states did not have Nader 2000 or other statewide votes to win bonus delegates, in practice the formula gave much higher weighting to the electoral college vote. If we look at the total number of delegates from all states at the Milwaukee Convention owing to each factor to get the percentage that came from each factor, the result is:

33.9% come from electoral college vote factor
25.6% come from National Committee delegates factor
14.3% come from Elected Greens factor
22.5% come from Statewide Green vote factor

Thanks to New York State's 2004 delegate coordinator, Roger Snyder, for deciphering how the formula worked in theory and practice.

9. The primary, caucus, and convention results are posted on the Green Party Web site at <http://www.gp.org>. Candidates Sheila Bilyeau, Peter Miguel Camejo, Paul Glover, Carol Miller, and Lorna Salzman supported the endorsement of Nader. The Green

presidential primary votes were as follows:

	CA	DC	MA	NM	R I	Total
Sheila Bilyeau		71				71
Peter Camejo	33,753					33,753
David Cobb	5,086	142		156	71	5,455
Paul Glover			78	55		133
Kent Mesplay	913		60	16	16	1,005
Carol Miller				345		345
Lorna Salzman	4,759		217		56	5,032
No Candidate		50			29	79
No Preference			236			236
Write-Ins		123	208		15	346
Blank			73			73
Total	44,589	386	1,069	628	131	46,803

10. David Cobb, "Green Party 2004 Presidential Strategy," distributed at the Green Party National Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., July 17–20, 2003. Emphasis in original. Reprinted in this collection.

11. John Rensenbrink and Tom Sevigny, "The Green Party and the 2004 Elections: A Three-Dimensional Strategy," May 1, 2003. Reprinted in this collection.

12. Ted Glick, "A Green Party 'Safe-States' Strategy," July 1, 2003. Reprinted in this collection.

13. Michael Tomasky, "Gang Green," American Prospect Online, July 23, 2003, <http://www.prospect.org/web/page.ww?section=root&name=ViewWeb&articleId=1256>.

14. Michael Albert, "Election Plan?" ZNet, August 12, 2003, [http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle ... emID=4037](http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle...emID=4037); Tom Hayden, "The Democrats in Iowa: Field of Dreams?" AlterNet, August 12, 2003, <http://www.AlterNet.org/story.html?StoryID=16584>.

15. Peter Miguel Camejo et al., "Open Letter to Ralph Nader (Green Gubernatorial Candidates' Statement)," December 1, 2002. Reprinted in this collection.

16. Jeff Proctor, "Kucinich Visits UNM Campus," Daily Lobo, October 15, 2003, [http://www.dailylobo.com/news/2003/10/1 ... Visits.Unm. Campus-528668.shtml](http://www.dailylobo.com/news/2003/10/1...Visits.Unm.Campus-528668.shtml). Kucinich stated in his campaign video that he will bring Greens into the Democratic Party. Greens in California and New York as well as New Mexico reported phone banking from the Kucinich campaign trying to get Greens to re-register as Democrats to support Kucinich in the primaries. See the discussion of Kucinich's Green reregistration efforts in Peter Miguel Camejo, "The Crisis in the Green Party: The Magic Number 39 and My Meetings with Cobb, Kucinich, and the Steering Committee," CounterPunch, April 6, 2005, http://www.counterpunch.org/camejo_04062005.html.

17. Micah Sifry, "Ralph Redux?" The Nation, November 24, 2003, <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20031124&c=l&s=sifry>. Sifry's article was posted on The Nation's Web site on November 6. Mother Jones' online "Daily Mojo" gave this story

more play by using Sifry's quotes from anti-Nader Greens in "Never Say Nader," November 11, 2003, http://www.motherjones.com/news/dailymojo/2003/11/we_603_02a.html.

18. "Statement on Green Strategy 2004 and Call for Dialogue and Action," posted on the Portside listserv, November 17, 2003. Reprinted in this collection.

19. For a balanced account of the arguments and actions of both sides of this split up through 1996, see Greta Gaard, *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

20. Nancy Allen cited by Steve Herrick, "Re: ASGP-COO here's something you may not have seen...," August 31, 2000, on the ASGP CC e-mail list.

21. John Rensenbrink, *Against All Odds: The Green Transformation of American Politics* (Raymond, Maine: Leopold Press, 1999), 205.

22. American Greens have also lost their programmatic focus on the changes in political institutions needed to make society a grassroots democracy. In the 1980s and early 1990s, many Greens focused on using local elections and municipal charter reforms to create grassroots-democratic structures of governance based on citizen assemblies and their wider coordination through councils of assembly-mandated delegates as a fundamental alternative to the centralized and hierarchic structures of the nation-state. See "Libertarian Municipalism," in Murray Bookchin wrote extensively on this approach. See Janet Biehl, ed., *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, ed. Janet Biehl (London: Cassell, 1997), and Biehl with Murray Bookchin, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997).

23. Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra, *Green Politics: The Global Promise* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984), 203.

24. Charlene Spretnak, "A Green Party -- It Can Happen Here," *The Nation*, April 21, 1984, 472-478.

25. Rensenbrink, *Against All Odds*, 129.

26. Nader spoke on independent politics to a January 11, 2004, forum in New Hampshire, sponsored by the Committee for a Unified Independent Party, a Newmanite front. The next day Doug Ireland blasted Nader on *The Nation's* Web site ("Nader and the Newmanites," January 12) for getting "in bed with the ultrasectarian cult-racket formerly known as the New Alliance Party." Democrats Wesley Clark, Howard Dean, John Edwards, Dennis Kucinich, and Al Sharpton also participated by sending representatives or answering questionnaires to the New Hampshire forum, but they escaped the ire of Ireland, who condemned Nader's run under any circumstances. Cobb and his supporters made much of Nader's attendance at this forum. In March, Ted Glick's "2004 and the Left" highlighted this as one of Nader's "questionable alliances." In late April, Cobb reportedly said in a public forum that Nader was "taking contributions from people Cobb called 'thinly veiled racists.'" (Doug Matson, "Green Party Hopeful Speaks His Mind," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 26, 2004.) In the ensuing

controversy in the Greens that Cobb's remark engendered, Dean Myerson, now a Cobb campaign spokesperson, made it clear to Carol Miller of New Mexico, who had complained about this negative campaigning by Cobb, that Cobb was referring to the New Alliance connection: "New Alliance people were working on or coordinating petitioning efforts [for Nader], who also have supported Buchanan. It is the connection to Buchanan that led to David's characterization." (Carol Miller quoting Dean Myerson, "Spin is not an answer," May 19, 2004.) The "New Alliance people" are concentrated in New York City. As one of Nader's two field coordinators in New York State, I know that they did offer to coordinate the New York petition drive, but were rejected by the Nader campaign. Their members collected about fifteen hundred of the twenty-eight thousand petition signatures for the Nader/Camejo ballot line that were submitted in New York State.

27. Greg Palast, "The Screwing of Cynthia McKinney," AlterNet, June 18, 2003, <http://www.gregpalast.com/detail.efm?artid=229&row=1>; Mark Donham, "Cynthia McKinney vs. Condi Rice: Why Do the Democrats Want to Deny Her Seniority?" CounterPunch, December 9, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/donham12092004.html>; Cynthia McKinney's letter of April 2005, reprinted on the ActionGreens listserv, April 22, 2005, in message 32438, "Same 01' Dirty Tricks—Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-GA)," <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ActionGreens/>.

28. It should be noted that the liberal and radical tendencies in the Greens and the positions they took on the 2004 campaign are general trends. Some individuals associated with each tendency joined with the other tendency on the 2004 campaign strategy debate. For example, Mike Feinstein, Annie Goeke, Carol Miller, and Lorna Salzman had been prominent in the ASGP but supported Nader in 2004. On the other side, Joel Kovel had been active in left Green tendencies but supported Cobb in 2004 (Joel Kovel, "Green Follies," CommonDreams.org, June 23, 2005, <http://www.commondreams.org/views04/0623-01.htm>).

29. Jan Jarboe Russell, "Growing the Party is Green Presidential Hopeful's Top Priority," San Antonio News-Express, December 7, 2003, <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/columnists/jrussell/stories/1094333.html>.

30. The quote is from the Supreme Court's unsigned majority opinion in *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. at 104. On the Republicans' vote suppression and the Democrats' capitulation, see Jeffrey Toobin, *Too Close to Call* (New York: Random House, 2001), Greg Palast, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* (New York: Penguin, 2003), and Alison Mitchell, "Black Lawmakers Protest as Congress Certifies Bush Victory; Gore Gavel's Down Linger Bitterness Over Bush Victory," *New York Times*, January 7, 2001.

31. A media consortium, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Tribune Co.* (Los Angeles *Times*, Chicago *Tribune*, *Newsday*, and others), the *Palm Beach Post*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Associated Press*, and *CNN*, spent nearly a year and \$900,000 having the respected National Opinion Research Council (NORC) at the University of Chicago reexamine every disputed ballot in the 2000 Florida presidential election. NORC found that Gore won the popular vote in Florida when all disputed ballots were examined. See Dan Keating and Dan Balz,

"Florida Recounts Would Have Favored Bush, But Study Finds Gore Might Have Won Statewide Tally of All Uncounted Ballots," Washington Post, November 12, 2001; Jim Naureckas, "Not That It Was Reported, But Gore Won," Newsday, November 15, 2001, <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/1115-02.htm>; and Toobin, Too Close to Call, 278-281.

32. Much of the commentary blaming Nader, such as the Epilogue to Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* (New York: Regan Books, 2001), claims that Nader concentrated his efforts in the swing states in 2000 as if he were trying to help Bush beat Gore. In fact, an analysis of candidate appearances and campaign advertising shows that Nader spent far more campaign resources in the safe states than in the swing states in 2000 and proportionately far fewer resources in the swing states than Bush and Gore. See Barry C. Burden, "Ralph Nader's Campaign Strategy in the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election," American Politics Research, forthcoming, available at <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~burden/apr1.pdf>.

33. Jeff Horwitz, "Nader vs. the Green Party?" Salon. com, June 24, 2004, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2004/06/24/cobb_campaign/index_np.html; Ted Glick, "The Green Party in 2004: More Than Party Survival," ZNet, February 7, 2005, <http://www.zmag.org/conrentlshowarticle.efm?SectionID=90&ItemID=7186>.

34. Jack Uhrich, "Re: [usgp-dx] I've Had Enough of Nader's Attacks on the GPUS," February 25, 2004, message on the Green Party discussion list.

35. Annie Goeke interview, June 1, 2005.

36. Ralph Nader, *Crashing the Party: How to Tell the Truth and Still Run for President* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001).

37. Cobb and his supporters would claim that Nader refused to share the volunteer and donor lists from the 2000 campaign. As a field coordinator for upstate New York for the 2000 Nader campaign, I know there was no problem using the volunteer lists for party organizing. Having talked with people on both sides of the controversy about the donor-list sharing, I believe some staff miscommunications on both sides made coordination more difficult than it needed to be. But in the end, Nader's campaign did share those lists with the national Green Party and a fund-raising letter from the Greens to those lists went out.

38. The Cardwell and Sprague commentaries on the Bastrop convention of the Green Party of Texas, along with the text of the bylaw amendment, can be found on the ActionGreens listserv archive at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ActionGreens/>. Cardwell's statement is in message 30720, February 10, 2005, and Sprague's statement and the bylaw amendment are in message 30734, February 11, 2005, in the thread "Anti-Democratic actions of Cobb in Texas."

39. Jack Uhrich, GP-US National Committee discussion e-list, March 14, 2004.

40. Nader's December 22, 2003, letter is reprinted in this collection, as are his March 24, 2004, and June 25, 2004, letters to the Greens requesting their endorsement for

his independent campaign.

41. Greg Gerritt, *Green Party Tempest: Weathering the Storm of 2004* (providence, RI: Moshassuck River Press, 2005), 7, 11, 13, 17–18, 28.

42. Available online at <http://greens4democracy.net>.

43. Medea Benjamin et al., "An Open Letter to Progressives: Vote Kerry and Cobb," July 23, 2004. Reprinted in this collection.

44. Cobb press release cited in Glick, "The Green Party in 2004."

45. David Cobb, interview by Michael Albert, "Why Run?" *Z Magazine*, September 2004, <http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Images/albert20904.html>; CounterPunch Wire, "The Quotations of David Cobb: He Doesn't Care How Many Votes He Gets," CounterPunch, September 13, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/cobb09132004.html>.

46. Joshua L. Weinstein, "LaMarche says she'll vote for whoever can beat Bush," *Portland Press Herald*, June 30, 2004; Susan M. Cover, "LaMarche Launches Campaign," *Kennebec Journal/Central Maine Morning Sentinel*, June 30, 2004.

47. Hannah Plotkin, "Green Party VP Wants Bush Out -- At Any Cost," *The Dartmouth*, October 25, 2004. For similar LaMarche statements during and after the campaign, see "Pat LaMarche Stumps in Nebraska," *Associated Press*, August 3, 2004; Martha Stoddard, "Green V.P.Candidate Says: Vote Your Heart," *Omaha World-Herald*, August 3, 2004; Christopher Arnott, "Not Easy Being Green," *New Haven Advocate*, August 5, 2004; Michael Reagan, "Green Party's LaMarche Runs a Strategic Campaign," *Brunswick ME Times Record*, September 20, 2004; Clarke Canfield, "Pat LaMarche Urges Residents to 'Vote Their Conscience,'" *Associated Press*, October 7, 2004; Pat LaMarche, "Greetings from Green Vice Presidential Candidate Pat LaMarche to the Greens," October 30, 2004; Michael Reagan, "Green Party Aims to Grow," *Brunswick Times Record*, November 12, 2004.

48. David Cobb, "Resurgence: The Green Party's Remarkable Transformation," *Green Horizon Quarterly* 6, (Winter 2005). Reprinted in this collection. For similar claims from Cobb's campaign leadership, see Blair Bobier and John Rensenbrink, "Ground breaking Presidential Campaign Goes Overtime," *Green Pages* 8 (Winter 2004), <http://www.gp.org/greenpages/content/volume8/issue4/oped2.php> and Ted Glick, "The Green Party in 2004," reprinted in this collection.

49. Mike Feinstein, "Green Party Election History -- By Year," http://www.feinstein.org/green_party/election_history.html.

50. Mike Feinstein, "Draft Green Party Voter Registration Update: Trends in U.S. Green registration, a month-by-month comparison, April 2000– present," May 9, 2005, <http://web.greens.org/stats>.

51. Ballot Access News, February 2004 and December 2004.

52. Alexander Cockburn, "Don't Say We Didn't Warn You -- Lessons They Won't Learn from November 2: A Word from Nader; A Last Look at Kerry and Michael Moore," CounterPunch Weekend Edition, November 6–7, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/cockburn11062004.html>.

53. David Cobb, "Resurgence: The Green Party's Remarkable Transformation," reprinted in this collection. The other post-election analyses from the Cobb leadership that make no comments on its impact on the campaign issues and debate are Bobier and Rensenbrink, "Groundbreaking Presidential Campaign Goes Overtime"; Glick, "The Green Party in 2004"; and Gerritt, Green Party Tempest.

54. Tom Hayden, "When Bonesmen Fight," May 8, 2004, thepolitic.org, posted on Z Net, May 22, 2004, <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=37&ItemID=5577>.

55. The few organizations and institutions on the left that did not surrender to Anybody But Bush should be noted. Among political organizations, two independent socialist groups, the International Socialist Organization and Solidarity, put significant energy into the Nader/Camejo campaign. Among media institutions and pundits, Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair of CounterPunch; the radical youth e-journal, Left Hook (<http://www.lefthook.org>); and Greg Bates (Ralph's Revolt: The Case for Joining Nader's Rebellion, 2004) and Joshua Frank (Left Out!: How Liberals Helped Reelect George W. Bush, 2005) of Common Courage Press stood almost alone among the left intelligentsia against the lesser-evil politics of the Anybody-But-Bush tide.

56. For a discussion of some of the contemporary ties between big corporate foundations and progressive media and NGOs, see Charles Shaw, "Regulated Resistance: Pt. 2 -- The Gatekeepers of the So-Called Left," Newtopia Magazine, May 3, 2005, <http://www.newtopiamagazine.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=40>. For a case study of how liberal corporate funding worked to co-opt and pacify the Black power movement of the 1960s, see Robert L. Allen, Black Awakening in Capitalist America (New York: Anchor Books, 1969; Reprint: New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990).

57. The visibility of a few antiwar Democrats like Dennis Kucinich, Barbara Lee, and Cynthia McKinney can obscure how overwhelmingly the Democrats have supported Bush's war and repression agenda. Key votes in Congress include:

War Powers, September 14, 2001: Only one (Barbara Lee) of 212 House Democrats and none of the fifty Senate Democrats voted against the resolution authorizing President Bush to use military force against anyone associated with September 11 attacks without a Declaration of War by Congress. This resolution was the legal basis for the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

Patriot Act, October 24–25, 2001: Only one (Russell Feingold) of fifty Senate Democrats and fifty-three of 212 House Democrats voted against.

Iraq War Resolution, October 10, 2002: Only twenty-one of fifty Senate Democrats and 126 of 212 House Democrats voted against. These relatively high votes against the

Iraq war resolution were the result of intensive lobbying by the peace movement. A month before the vote, only a few Senate Democrats and about twenty-five House Democrats were committed to opposing the Iraq war. Once the invasion was launched, even this core opposition shrank, as the following votes show.

"Unequivocal Support" for Iraq War, March 22, 2003: As the invasion of Iraq began, none of the forty-eight Senate Democrats and only eleven of 204 House Democrats voted against this resolution expressing "unequivocal support ... for [President Bush's] firm leadership and decisive action in the conduct of military operations in Iraq as part of the on-going Global War on Terrorism."

1st Supplemental Appropriation for Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, \$79 billion, April 3, 2003: None of the forty-eight Senate Democrats and only nine of 204 House Democrats voted against.

2nd Supplemental Appropriation for Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, \$87 billion, October 17, 2003: Only eleven of forty-eight Senate Democrats and 119 of 204 House Democrats voted against.

3rd Supplemental Appropriation for Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, \$25 billion, June 22–24, 2004: None of the forty-eight Senate Democrats and only fifteen of 204 House Democrats voted against including this supplemental funding in the Defense Department appropriation.

4th Supplemental Appropriation for Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, \$82 billion, May 6, 2005: None of the forty Senate Democrats voted against the Senate or conference committee versions. Only 34 of 202 House Democrats voted against the House version of the bill on March 15. On May 5, only fifty-four House Democrats voted against the final version reported out of the House–Senate conference committee, with the increase in no votes due to objection to anti-immigrant provisions added in conference, not to funding the Iraq and Afghanistan occupations.

58. See, for example, Benjamin et al., "An Open Letter to Progressives." In September, another statement by prominent Nader 2000 supporters called for a Kerry vote in swing states without even calling for a Nader or Cobb vote in safe states. It referred readers to the same <http://www.swing04.com> Web site used by the July 23 statement to identify swing states. See "Nader 2000 Leaders Organize to Defeat Bush," September 14, 2004, <http://www.vote2stopbush.com>.

59. The comparison between Nader's 2000 and 2004 vote totals must also take into account the fact that the Nader/Camejo ticket was denied ballot access in many populous states where Nader was on the ballot in 2000, including Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The totals cited are the Federal Election Commission's official totals. We will never know how many more write-in votes Nader/Camejo received. Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Oregon do not even count write-ins as a matter of election law. Many other states do a poor job of counting them.

60. E. J. Kessler, "Billionaire Liberals Seek To Fund Idea Mills," *Forward*, January 21,

2005, <http://www.forward.com/main/article.php?id=2575>.

61. David Rosenbaum, "Kerry Team Settles Dispute with Kucinich Delegates Over Iraq," New York Times, July 11, 2004; "Did Kucinich Sell Out Anti-War Democrats?" Democracy Now! July 14, 2004, <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=04/07/14/1410234>; Charley Underwood, "A Kucinich Delegate in Boston and the Totalitarian Democratic Party," August 1, 2004, http://bellaciao.org/en/article.php3?id_article=2305.

62. Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), 128–133; Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To Win a Nuclear War: The Pentagon's Secret War Plans* (London: Zed Books, 1987), 164–168.

63. Carl Davidson and Marilyn Katz, "Moving from Protest to Politics: Dumping Bush's Regime in 2004," April 28, 2003, http://www.cc-ds.org/Peace%20and%20Justice/moving.Jrom_protescto_politics.htm.

The phrase "From Protest to Politics" in the title of the Davidson/Katz paper seems to reflect a conscious retreat from the radicalism of 1968 that developed in response to the liberalism of 1964. As a national officer of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) between 1966 and 1968, it could not have been lost on Davidson that this phrase resurrected the liberal slogan that civil rights leader Bayard Rustin coined after the Johnson landslide of 1964. Rustin was the principal organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and a harsh liberal critic of Black, student, and antiwar radicals. In calling for a continuation of the moratorium on demonstrations called by the civil rights leadership in the summer of 1964 in deference to Johnson's campaign, Rustin argued that the liberal/labor/Black electoral coalition behind Johnson demonstrated an electoral realignment that was creating a permanent Democratic majority for progressive reform. (Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement," *Commentary*, February 1965). Radicals reached the opposite conclusion, arguing that demonstrations and, indeed, disruptive resistance were needed to pressure the power structure for reforms. They pointed to the fact that Johnson delayed action on the Voting Rights Act until after the 1964 election, and then moved on it only after the widely televised Alabama state trooper brutality against civil rights marchers in Selma in March 1965 created a national public climate that forced his hand. The other major pending civil rights legislation, the Fair Housing Act, languished until the aftermath of the King assassination in 1968.

Among those radicals was Carl Davidson, whose proposal adopted by SDS to support draft resistance at the very end of 1966 gave SDS its counter-slogan to Rustin's in 1967, "From Protest to Resistance." The National Mobilization Committee adopted that slogan for the famous October 21, 1967, antiwar demonstration at the Pentagon later that year. The McCarthy liberals, in turn, threw Rustin's slogan back at the mobilization for the Pentagon demonstration to convince antiwar youth to support their candidate as a more "realistic" strategy. **McCarthy played the role in 1968 that Kucinich did in 2004 in seeking to head off a third-party insurgency. In announcing his candidacy on November 20, 1967, McCarthy said he wanted "to provide an alternative for those who become cynical and make threats of support for third parties or fourth parties or other irregular political movements." McCarthy was**

trying to head off the movement for an independent Peace and Freedom ticket. A ticket headed by Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr. Benjamin Spock had been promoted in the lead-up to the National Conference for a New Politics in September 1967. That conference failed to support an independent ticket in 1968, but the independent Peace and Freedom movement continued in California and other states and ran independent antiwar slates in several states under various names. See Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS (New York: Vintage, 1974), 313–316; Dave Dellinger, *More Power Than We Know: The People's Movement Towards Democracy* (New York: Anchor, 1975), 89–91; Michael Friedman, ed., *The New Left of the Sixties* (Berkeley: Independent Socialist Press 1972), 35–93.

64. Pushing Roosevelt toward his Second New Deal in 1935 was left to economically progressive but socially reactionary demagogues such as Huey Long, Father Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith, and Dr. Frances Townsend, who coalesced in the 1936 Union Party presidential campaign of Representative William Lemke that received 2 percent of the vote. "In 1935, ... when a poll by the Democratic National Committee revealed that Huey Long was likely to receive three to four million votes if Long ran for president as an independent in 1936, FDR launched what became known as 'the second hundred days,' during which time the Social Security Act, the Wagner Act, and the 'soak the rich' Wealth Tax Act were passed." Douglas O'Hara, "The Merchants of Fear: Smearing Nader," *CounterPunch*, February 24, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/ohara02242004.html>.

65. Kevin Spidel, interview by William Rivers Pitt, "Ordinary Heroes and the Rising Power of the Roots," *Truthout*, January 27, 2005, http://www.truthout.org/docs_05/012805U.shtml.

66. Medea Benjamin, "A Special Message from Media Benjamin," posted on the Progressive Democrats of America Web site, March 14, 2005, <http://www.pdamerica.org/postcards/medea-lettec3-14-05.php>.

67. Mitofsky International, "California Recall Election Exit Poll -- October 7, 2003," <http://www.mitofskyinternational.com/california/CAGV0230 H.HTM>.

68. Katherine Q. Seelye, "Nader Emerging as Threat Democrats Feared," *New York Times*, October 16, 2004:

Though he hurts Kerry more than Bush, there's a potential that he hurts Bush, too," said Anna Greenberg, a Democratic pollster who has examined Nader voters, although she said that potential Nader voters were difficult to find and hard to track. She said the profile of likely Nader supporters was changing and beginning to resemble that of voters who supported Ross Perot, the third-party candidate in 1996, rather than those who supported Nader in 2000. His backers then tended to be split equally between men and women and were white, liberal and college-educated, according to pollsters. But Greenberg said voters who support him now tend to be white men, blue-collar, fiscally conservative, populist, against open trade, angry about the

high cost of health care and prescription drugs and fiercely opposed to the war in Iraq.

69. A June 2004 Gallup poll found that "With Nader thrown in, Kerry's percentage among Black voters declined from 81 percent to 73 percent. Nader drew 10 percent of Black voters, dropping Bush to only 9 percent. Among Latino voters in a three-way race, Kerry's support fell from 57 percent to 52 percent, while Bush's fell from 38 percent to 35 percent. Nader was the choice of 8 percent of Latino voters." "Poll: Kerry Leads Among Minority Voters," CNN.com July 7, 2004, <http://edition.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/07/06/gallup.poll/>. After Nader did not receive the Green Party's support at the end of June, his numbers among all groups fell considerably. But election day exit polls showed that the proportion of Nader's voters that were non-white was 48 percent (5 percent Black, 36 percent Latino, and 7 percent other non-white), far higher than for Kerry (34 percent) and Bush (12 percent). Exit polls also showed more union households in Nader's base (33 percent) compared to Kerry's (30 percent) and Bush's (18 percent). Considering all the liberal hand-wringing over what the "moral issues" vote meant in 2004, it is worth noting that more voters who identified moral issues as why they voted for their candidate were in Nader's voter base (57 percent) than Kerry's (8 percent) or Bush's (35 percent). See the exit poll conducted by Edison/Mitofsky for the National Election Pool (ABC, AP, CBS, CNN, FOX, NBC), http://election.cbsnews.com/election2004/poll/poll_p__u_s_all_us0.shtml.

70. Todd Chretien, "The Dem Plot Against Nader: Florida Comes to California," CounterPunch, August 5, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/chretien08052004.html>.

71. Noam Chomsky, "The Non Election of 2004," Z Magazine, January 2005, <http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Jan2005/chomsky0105.html>. On the moral values question, Chomsky reports:

In some polls, "when the voters were asked to choose the most urgent moral crisis facing the country, 33 percent cited 'greed and materialism,' 31 percent selected 'poverty and economic justice,' 16 percent named abortion, and 12 percent selected gay marriage" (Pax Christi). In others, "when surveyed voters were asked to list the moral issue that most affected their vote, the Iraq war placed first at 42 percent, while 13 percent named abortion and 9 percent named gay marriage" (Zogby). Whatever voters meant, it could hardly have been the operative moral values of the Administration, celebrated by the business press.

Introduction Part II

1. Ronnie Dugger, "Ralph, Don't Run," The Nation, December 2, 2002, http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=2002_1202&s=dugger.

2. Eric Alterman, "Bush's Useful Idiot," The Nation, September 16, 2004, http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=2004_1004&s=alterman.

Chapter 1

A Green Party "Safe-States" Strategy

1. This does not mean all individual Democrats are "bad guys." There are a not-insignificant number of people like Kucinich and Sharpton, progressives with solid histories of often-courageous activism. Over time it is essential that the third-party movement help to bring these people out of the Democrat Party and into a genuinely progressive independent political formation.
2. "Focusing" on the safe states should not be understood to mean that the Green Party would only put their candidates on the ballot in those states. In the "unsafe" states where there is significant Green organization -- which is most of them -- it is to be expected that state organizations will nominate or petition to put presidential/vice-presidential candidates on the ballot. I support this.
3. I've researched presidential voting results for 2000, 1996, and 1992. This research yielded twenty-three states with over 103 million people in them with voting results from those three years which make it extremely likely the winner will be from the same party as was the case in all three of those presidential election years. There are another five states with over 35 million people in them which are very likely to go the same way as in 2000. There's a good chance, based upon what happened in 2000, that, in the last month or two of the campaign, the key time period, there will be another 5-10 states that will fall into this category of a near-sure thing for Bush or the Democrat. To see the basis for these projections and the specific twenty-eight states, write to me.

Chapter 3

How the Greens Chose Kerry Over Nader

1. Garance Franke-Rura, "No Tie -- Cobb! The True Story of How a Man You've Barely Heard of Beat Ralph Nader for the Green Party Nomination." American Prospect, Web exclusive: June 28, 2004.
2. John Rensenbrink and Patrick Mazza, "Report on the ASGP Middleburg Meeting 1996," <http://www.mainegreens.org/directaction/voices/jrensen/middle.htmz>.
3. From The Nation, November 3, 2003. Ralph Nader's Skeleton Closet, <http://www.realchange.org/nader.htm>.
4. "NoKerryNoBush, Dems Promote Fake Greens for Kerry Org," SF Indymedia, Friday April 09, 2004, <http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2004/0411689628.php>
5. "Why John Kerry?" Greens for Impact, <http://www.greensforimpact.com/doc/wjk.cfm>
6. Walt Contreras Sheasby, "George Soros and the Rise of the Neo-centrics," Citizine, <http://www.citizinemag.com/politics/pol...eocentrics.htm>.

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Appendix

Reexamining the Green Party Nominating Convention: A Statistical Analysis

1. Outliers are measurements that are extremely large or small compared with the rest of the sample data and are suspected of misrepresenting the population from which they were collected. Using the Grubb's outlier test, the probability that the number of registered Greens in California fits with the distribution of the remainder of the data is less than 5 percent.
2. The geometric mean is a measure of the central tendency of a data set (like the average) that minimizes the effects of extreme values (like Iowa in this case).
3. Green Party roll call vote at the National Convention, <http://www.thegreenpapers.com/T04/Gr-Nom.phtml>.
4. National Convention Voting Procedures, <http://green.gpus.org/vote/displayproposal.php?proposalId=82>.

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Todd Chretien was the California student coordinator for the Nader/LaDuke 2000 and the Medea Benjamin for Senate 2000 campaigns, and the Nader/Camejo 2004 northern California field coordinator. He is a member of the Green Party in Oakland, California, and a frequent contributor to the international Socialist Review (<http://www.isreview.org>).

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Mark Dunlea is former chair of the Green Party of New York State and is the author of *Madame President: The Unauthorized Biography of the First Green Party President* (Big Toad Books, 2004), which imagines what would have happened if a Green had been president on September 11, 2001.

Joshua Frank is a writer living in New York. He has appeared as a political commentator on MSNBC. His investigative reports and columns have appeared in many publications, among them: CounterPunch, Z Magazine, Common Dreams, Clamor, Green Left Weekly, and Left Turn magazine. He is the author of the newly released, *Left Out! How Liberals Helped Reelect George W Bush* (Common Courage Press, 2005).

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Keep Spinning Us to Death (Wiley, 2005). His writings are archived on the Web at <http://www.normansolomon.com> and <http://www.WarMadeEasy.com>.

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Jack Uhrich is a member of the South Carolina Green Party Steering Committee and was Fund-raising Director for the Green Party of the United States.

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Sherry Wolf is on the editorial board of the *International Socialist Review* (<http://www.isreview.org>) and has written articles on "The Origins of Gay Oppression" and "The Democrats and War: No Lesser Evil."

Re: Independent Politics: The Green Party Strategy Debate

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